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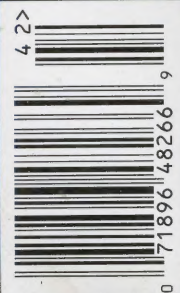
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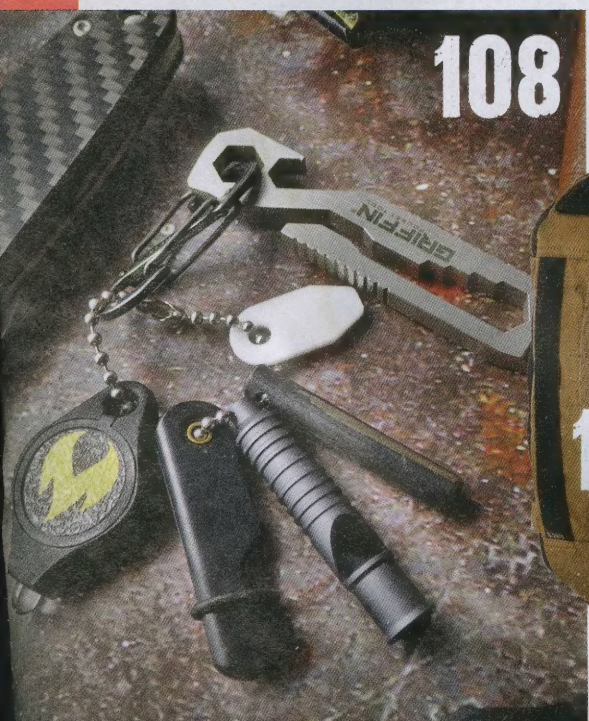
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The advice given in this magazine is the opinion of the author of each article, based on their personal experiences and knowledge. The right response to a disaster may not be the same in all situations. Articles are for informational purposes only. The publisher accepts no responsibility for injuries or liability arising from relying upon information contained herein. In the event of an emergency, follow the advice of first responders and trained professionals. Have a preparedness plan researched from multiple sources and avoid high-risk situations. Follow all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding firearm ownership, carry and use.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to PREPPER SURVIVAL GUIDE!

» This is our 21st issue. Can you believe it? Our writers have been hard at work behind the scenes, brainstorming topics to cover and then putting together truly incredible articles. As I like to tell people, I have the best job in the world because I get to see all these great stories before anyone else. Our goal in every issue is to provide you with practical, actionable information that will keep you and your family safe.

This time around, we're covering a wide range of subjects. Dana Benner talks about how to develop the proper mindset to deal with any crisis. Our resident survival doctor, Joe Alton, goes into detail on how to handle bleeding injuries. One of the best wilderness survival instructors around, Reuben Bolieu, covers trapping basics.

That's not all, of course. We also have information on building a food pantry at home, planning for what to do about your pets in a disaster, and even discussing what pepper spray is and how it works. On top of that, we have a buyer's guide for survival knives and our usual New Products layout.

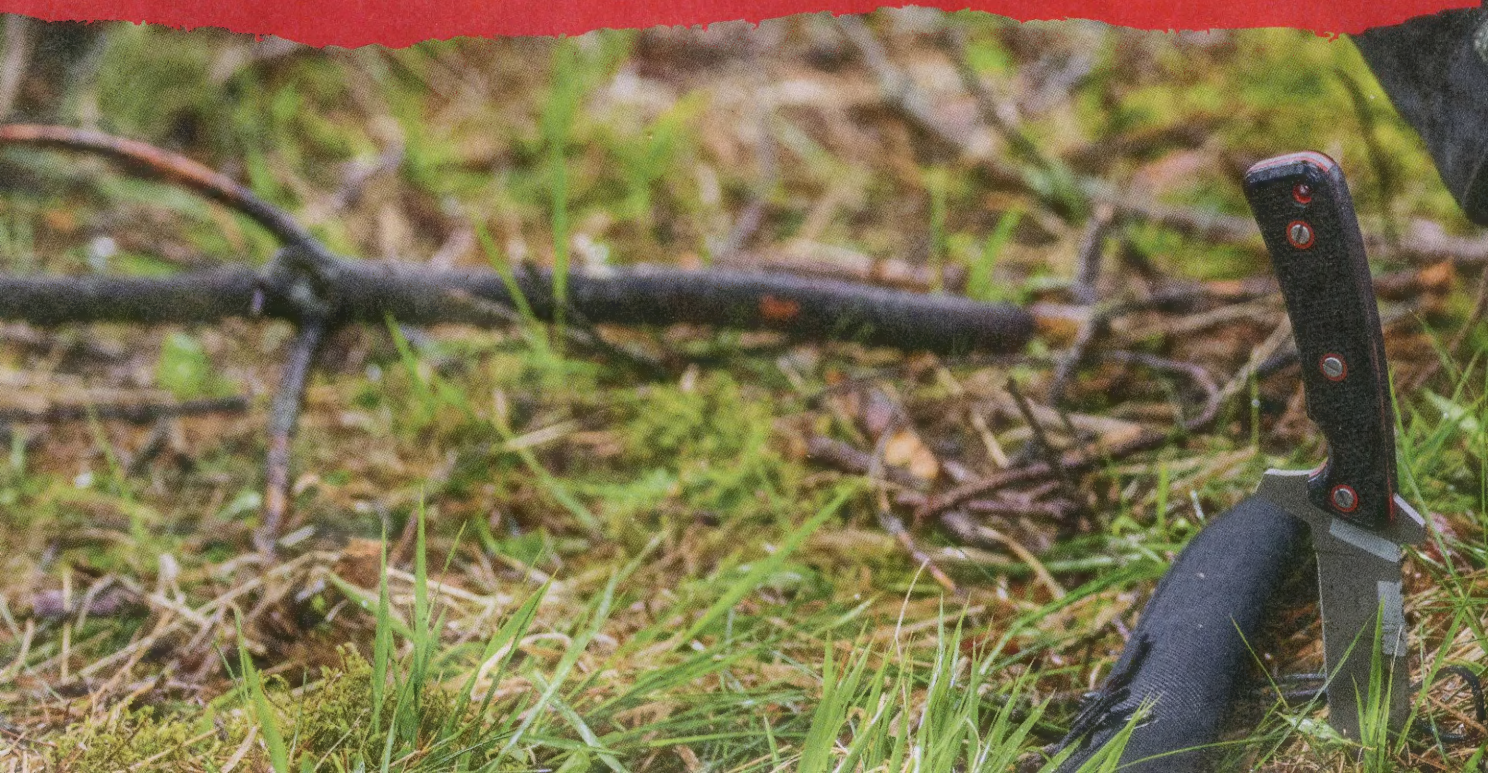
Remember, though, that reading the magazine is the easy part. You need to take that information and put it to use in your life for it to have true value. We're happy to guide the way.

—Jim Cobb, Editor-in-Chief

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KEY IDEAS AND PREPS TO STAY ALIVE

SURVIVAL ESSENTIALS







MINDSET

KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME

YOUR LIFE COULD DEPEND ON IT

BY DANA BENNER



IF SOMEONE WERE TO ASK ME WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SURVIVAL TOOL I HAVE, I WOULD SAY MY BRAIN, OR RATHER MY ABILITY TO THINK. AFTER ALL, WE ALL HAVE BRAINS, BUT NOT EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO USE THEM. ABOUT 90% OF SURVIVAL REVOLVES AROUND PROBLEM SOLVING.

THE OUTCOME OF EVERY situation that you will find yourself in will depend on your ability to process information and then act. Sometimes you will have time to think, but many times the process happens in a split second. Let's talk about gathering that information so you can keep your mind in the game.

Owning reference books is great, but actually reading them to learn the information they contain is better.



Know your limits,
but recognize that quite
often you can do far
more than you realize.

**YOU NEED TO
BELIEVE, AT
A CORE LEVEL,
THAT YOU WILL
OVERCOME THE
OBSTACLES YOU
ARE FACING.**

LIFE IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

None of us were born with all the information we need to make it in the world, especially in this day and age. We need to gather information to survive from a variety of sources and from these sources lessons need to be learned. That said, we are all born with the ability to think and somewhere buried deep within the cerebral cortex is the genetic makeup needed for basic survival. The trick is to draw upon both our instincts and our ability to process new information. Doing that is what I consider the “learning experience.”

There are many great books full of information on topics from identifying food sources to setting up shelter and starting a fire. The problem is that unless you get out and try the tasks described—actually get your hands dirty and make mistakes—then they are just words on the page. Life is the best teacher of all and learning things the hard way can be very painful, but you’ll remember them. My body is full of scars from doing things the wrong way. All of them taught me valuable lessons that expanded my knowledge base.

Another vital source of information is the experiences of others. Learn from those who have

been there and done that so you can avoid making some of the same mistakes.

ADAPT, IMPROVISE AND OVERCOME

No matter how much gear you have or how many survival courses you have taken, there will be times when life throws you a curveball. There are no rules in the survival game and nothing happens as it was supposed to, or how you were trained. After 10 years of military service, I learned to expect the unexpected and to be willing and able to deal with it. When crap happens, you must adapt (to the situation), improvise (complete the mission with the tools at hand) and overcome (complete the mission, or reach the objective). Remember that your ability to think is your greatest asset.

In his book *Brothers on the Bashkaus*, Eugene Buchanan recounts his hair-raising story of how he and three other American white-water experts faced the Bashkaus, one of the most dangerous rivers in the former Soviet Union. Despite good planning and bringing state-of-the-art gear with them, things went wrong as soon as they arrived in Russia. Unforeseen circumstances forced them to leave most of their gear behind, leaving them no alternative but to team up with local river runners. Facing a language barrier and using homemade watercraft, the Americans had to rely

upon their white-water skill, a positive attitude and trust in their teammates to make it through. They had to adapt, improvise and overcome. At all times they had to keep their minds in the game; their very survival depended upon it.

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger" is a popular phrase. In some aspects this is true, but sometimes not realizing your own limitations will teach you the ultimate lesson: death. A day doesn't go by that I am not learning something. Anyone who tells you that they don't need to learn anything more is a fool. You must remember that there is always someone who knows more than you do. If you keep your mind in the game,

you will try to learn as much as you can from those people. This idea can be applied to any aspect of life.

I hear people say that they want to live off-grid, to live off the land. They have read all the books and have bought all the gear. It's all great until a disaster strikes. It is then that they find out the hard way that they didn't have the proper mindset to survive. Jon Krakauer wrote a book called *Into the Wild* that tells the story of a young man who did just that—and ended up paying the ultimate price for not facing up his own limitations.

In April 1992, Christopher Johnson McCandless ventured out to get away and live on his own. While this is a thought that many of us have had, McCandless' problem was that he didn't have the mindset to make it work. He had no real plan; he didn't properly prepare. Worst of all, he refused



Lessons learned the hard way tend to stick with us the most, but we can learn from the mistakes of others by reading about or listening to accounts of their adventures.



to acknowledge his own limitations. That proved to be fatal.

ESCAPE AND EVADE

Escape and evade is a very important aspect in the world of survival. If you are trying to survive, it is usually better to extract yourself from the area than to stand and fight. Like everything else, use your head. The military teaches courses on this subject and depending on what your job is, they can be ongoing and intense. Front-line personnel are often put into real-life scenarios and forced to use limited resources and their minds to make it to safety without being captured. Civilian escape and evade courses, while still intense, can't totally duplicate the military version. What

they both teach are the principles of problem-solving and keeping your mind in the game while under extreme pressure.

Brian Murphy wrote *87 Days Below Zero*, which tells the story of a World War II pilot forced to crash in the Alaska wilderness in the winter. The plane carried five crew members. The lone survivor, Leon Crane, managed to stay alive for 12 weeks. Crane, though not trying to evade, was able to apply all of the lessons he was taught and he was able to keep a level head. He had to solve problems under extreme circumstances.

NEVER LET YOUR GUARD DOWN

We've all been there: that guided hunting or fishing

trip, white-water rafting trip or even a dinner cruise with your spouse. When we go out on these excursions, we are putting our safety, our very lives, in the hands of others. For me, that is not a very comfortable feeling. On that dinner cruise, while everyone else is heading for the bar, I'm busy locating the personal flotation devices and identifying escape routes. In restaurants and theaters, I always find the exits and then sit near them, usually with my back against the wall. My mind is always in the game.

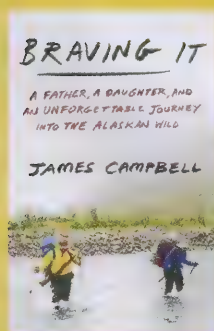
Sometimes, stuff just happens. But, while some things can't be avoided, most of the time it is due to human error. When both factors come into play, you are in a world of hurt.

One such experience is described in *Into Thin Air*, also by Jon Krakauer.

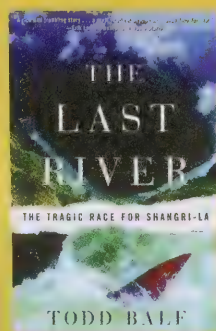
BEING AWARE
AND ALERT TO
THE WORLD
AROUND YOU
WILL GO A
LONG WAY
TOWARD
KEEPING YOU
SAFE AND
SECURE.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

HERE ARE MORE TITLES THAT OFFER LESSONS FROM REAL-LIFE SURVIVAL SITUATIONS.
EACH HAS LESSONS YOU CAN LEARN THROUGH READING ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES.



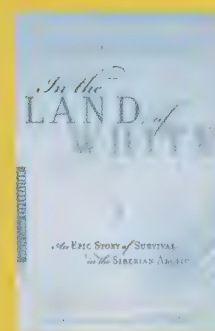
Braving It
by James Campbell
A story about a father and daughter's adventures in Alaska.



The Last River
by Todd Balf
The tale of an ill-fated river expedition in Tibet.



Call of the American Wild
by Guy Grieve
The story of a man living in wild Alaska.



In the Land of White Death
by Valerian Albanov
An account of survival in the Siberian Arctic.

In 1996, Krakauer joined a team of climbers on an adventure of a lifetime, to climb Mount Everest.

The team that Krakauer was on was led by an experienced climber and consisted of people with a range of climbing experience. When you join such an expedition you are trusting your life to someone else, but even so, you must always remain alert and observant.

Mount Everest is dangerous even in the best of times, but on this climb, a huge storm blew in out of nowhere, trapping most of the climbers near the summit. When all was said and done, five climbers lost their lives and many of the survivors were suffering from severe frostbite. What allowed Krakauer to be one of the survivors? Despite the conditions, the hypoxia and nearly freezing to death, he kept his head in the game. He didn't let his guard down and he relied as much on his own skill as he did on that of his guide.

ULTIMATE SURVIVAL

"The trick to survival is just not dying." I'm not the first to say this and I am not sure when or where I first heard it, but it defines what we do. Survival means never giving up, never giving in and staying focused.

In his book *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, Aron Ralston tells his story of being trapped in a slot canyon for nearly six days with an 800-pound boulder trapping his right hand and wrist. An avid outdoorsman,



Skills and gear will only get you so far. Determination and drive will take you the rest of the way.

Ralston took his mind out of the game for a split second and committed the cardinal sin of not telling someone where he was going and when to expect him back. That one mistake nearly cost him his life. Ralston ended up rescuing himself by cutting his own arm off. (The book was made into the film *127 Hours*.)

GET OUT OF YOUR OWN HEAD

Learning the skills needed for survival is not something that happens overnight. It is a lifelong experience. Mistakes will be made along the way. Learn from them, as well as from the mistakes made by others. Trust the advice given by people you

respect. Stay positive and don't dwell on the past. Worry about those things that you can control. Rely upon your training and don't start second-guessing. Get out of your own head!

Can you learn everything you need to know from a book? No, you can't. Books are just another tool available to us as we learn. While experience is the best teacher, if we don't learn from the experience of others, we are bound to repeat their mistakes. Reading these stories will help you keep your mind in the game.

About the Author Dana Benner lives in New Hampshire. He has been writing about all aspects of the outdoors, survival and self-sufficiency for 35 years.



FOOD STORAGE

KEEPING BELLIES FULL

COMMONSENSE PANTRY PLANNING

BY JIM COBB

ONE OF THE MANY LESSONS PEOPLE HAVE LEARNED IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS IS THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A GOOD SUPPLY OF VARIOUS NECESSITIES ON HAND. WHEN TAKEOUT DINNER WASN'T AN OPTION FOR A WHILE, AND STORES WERE EITHER CLOSED OR HAD BARE SHELVES, MANY FAMILIES WERE LEFT SCRAMBLING TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO.





AS FOOD
COSTS
CONTINUE
TO SOAR,
ANYTHING
YOU CAN
STORE FOR
LATER CAN
SAVE YOU
MONEY.

FORTUNATELY, YOU DON'T

need to go out and drop hundreds of dollars on any sort of special "survival" food to keep stashed for emergencies. Doing so isn't just expensive, it can lead to possible digestive and other health issues as some people have adverse reactions to eating them and nothing else for days on end. Many of these dehydrated and similarly packaged meals are high in sodium, for example, which can cause problems after a while.

FAMILIAR FOODS

One of the most common mantras in the preparedness world is, "Store what you eat, eat what you store."

What it boils down to is to focus on the foods that you and your family already consume on a regular basis, concentrating on things that are shelf-stable and that have long storage lives. You know you like them, and you know that they like you.

Most families in the United States get the majority of their food from grocery stores. So, what foods found there would be good choices for stocking up? Things like:

- * Canned goods (vegetables, fruits, meats)
- * Pouched meats (tuna, chicken)
- * Dry pasta
- * Jarred or canned pasta sauce
- * Rice
- * Beans
- * Soup mixes



Many of the items found in an average grocery store are just fine for a long-term pantry.

- * Instant potatoes
- * Baking mixes

These don't last forever, of course, but they will remain perfectly edible and tasty for at least a year and in many cases for far longer than that. This brings us to the next guideline.

ROTATION

Your food pantry should be in constant rotation. Use food from it daily and replace it as you go along. This ensures that at any given time you have the freshest possible food in it. Use FIFO—which stands for first in, first out—as a guide for rotating supplies, and always use the oldest food first. When you bring groceries home, mark them with the date purchased and place the new items at the back of the shelf.

BEST-BY DATES

If you grab a can of stew from the shelf and see that the date on it passed a week ago, that doesn't mean it needs to be tossed. The date listed on the package is merely the last date by which the manufacturer will guarantee peak taste, texture and nutrition. From that day forward, the quality will decline. If the can isn't bulging or damaged and the food inside looks, smells and tastes OK, you'll likely be just fine eating it, especially after cooking it. That said, if you're rotating your food regularly, as you're supposed to do, this shouldn't be an issue.

HOME PRESERVED

Of course, you can always preserve your own food through canning, dehydrating or even freeze-drying. Doing so is certainly part of the self-reliant lifestyle toward which many of us are striving. Bear in mind that you aren't limited only to the foods you can grow yourself. If you find a great deal at the grocery store on something, have the experience and equipment needed to can it at home allows you to take great advantage of sales.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

When a crisis hits, make the best use of the food you have available. The stuff in the refrigerator and freezer won't instantly turn rancid, though the clock does start ticking when the power blinks out. Assuming no other factors come into play, the food in the refrigerator will stay cold for about four hours or so, provided you're not opening the door every 10 minutes to check on it. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that eggs, milk and meat should be thrown out after two hours above 40 F. A better idea is to cook what you can before it gets to that point, if possible, perhaps sharing some of it with neighbors so it doesn't just go to waste.

As for the freezer, you have a little more time. If it is fairly full, figure about 24 hours before things start to go south. Again, keep the lid closed to keep as much cold inside as possible. As

long as the food is cold to the touch and still has some ice on or in it, you should be OK to refreeze it again or let it finish thawing and cook it up. If you don't routinely keep your freezer full, fill 2-liter soda bottles with water, leaving a couple of inches of head space, and freeze them. Not only will this help keep your food cold longer, it's also a great way to store a little more water for emergency use.

Of course, if you're able to use your preservation skills to can or dehydrate the food before it goes bad, so much the better. The takeaway here is that most families have some amount of food in their refrigerators and freezers that will go bad if they don't do something with it. It is a better idea to get that food into bellies than garbage cans.

**STICKING WITH
FOODS YOU LIKE
MEANS THERE'S
LESS RISK OF
DIETARY UPSET
DURING AN
EMERGENCY.**

AN EASY MONTH OF MEALS

BE READY FOR ANYTHING



HOW TO SURVIVE TORNADOES, EARTHQUAKES, PANDEMICS, MASS SHOOTINGS, NUCLEAR DISASTERS, AND OTHER LIFE-THREATENING EVENTS
DAISY LUTHER

In *Be Ready for Anything*, author Daisy Luther talks about frugal meal planning.

One suggestion is to make a list of seven meals that your family likes. As you're able to afford to do so, purchase ingredients to make four of each of those meals. Concentrate on shelf-stable options, although frozen products are fine. Meats should be broken down and repackaged in meal-size servings for the freezer. While most of us prefer garden-fresh vegetables, having canned or frozen varieties on hand is better than going without altogether.

If you do this, you'll have 28 meals on hand, ready to go at a moment's notice. Not 28 servings, but 28 full meals for the entire family.

The idea is to put together a small variety of food that will keep for a fairly long time, and that you know how to put to use. This isn't "survival food" that's been packaged to withstand the apocalypse. We're not talking about the end of the world here. Tell you what, though: If the family's primary breadwinner loses their income, it might certainly feel like the end of the world.

HOW MUCH TO STORE?

This can be a difficult concept for some people to get their heads around. How much food do they really need to last a given period of time? Menu planning is one way to figure this out.

Grab a notebook and write out menus for a solid two weeks. We're talking every single thing you and your family will eat each day, down to individual

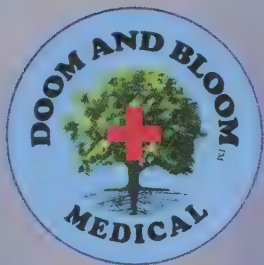
Concentrate on using foods that store well, of course, as you'll be pulling everything for each meal from your pantry. Once you have a full two weeks, add up the quantities for each item, then multiply each based on the length of time you're planning for. You might not follow this menu plan exactly, but this exercise will give you a pretty good feel for how much food you'll need to store.

Few people have the space to store enough food to last a year, much less several years. But that



ingredients for every meal. Estimates are fine for seasonings, condiments and such. Don't overlook snacks or other incidental food consumption that happens regularly.

doesn't mean you should just throw your hands in the air and give up. As a practical matter, you're far more likely to experience a temporary crisis than you are a world-altering event.



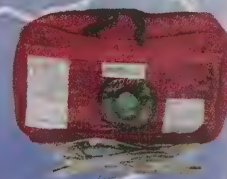
ARE YOU PREPARED?

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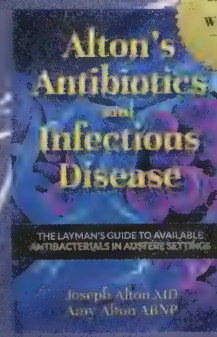
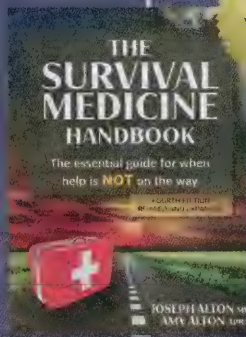
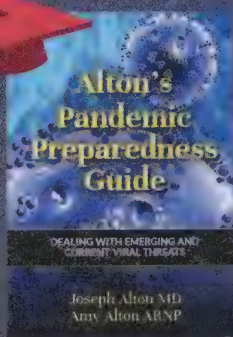
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MEDICAL

BLEEDING CONTROL

YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE

BY JOE ALTON, M.D.

IN TROUBLED TIMES, TRAUMATIC WOUNDS MAY BE COMMONPLACE IN MANY DIFFERENT SCENARIOS. IN SURVIVAL SETTINGS, DAILY ACTIVITIES MAY CAUSE INJURIES THAT COULD BE LIFE-THREATENING. THEREFORE, THE PERSON MEDICALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR A FAMILY OR MUTUAL ASSISTANCE GROUP MUST ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR THE WORST POSSIBLE INJURIES. SOME OF THESE, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT CAUSE MAJOR BLEEDING, MAY END IN A TRAGIC OUTCOME IF NOT TREATED RAPIDLY.



DIRECT PRESSURE

When you encounter a person with a bleeding wound, the first course of action is to stop the hemorrhage. In the majority of mild to moderate cases, direct pressure on the wound might stop the bleeding all by itself.

The medic should always have nitrile gloves in his or her pack. Gloves will help prevent the wound from contamination by a dirty hand. Try to avoid touching the palm or finger portions of the gloves as you put them on. If there are no gloves, grab a bandanna or other barrier; thick is better than thin. Although clean hands are important, don't spend a lot of time looking for the hand sanitizer. Expose the wound and stop the bleeding immediately.

If you have a medical kit, you'll have to get to the items you need. In this case, you can temporarily apply pressure on the wound with a knee to keep hands free for the few seconds it should take to access your equipment.

There isn't a great deal of consensus regarding the proper way to apply direct pressure, but some actions are just common sense. Hold a barrier dressing or cloth item in one hand and place it directly on the bleeding area. Place the other hand on top of the first and, arms straight, position yourself so the most weight is directly over the wound. This will give the maximum amount of pressure possible on the bleeding area, which

Being able to treat wounds large and small is critically important.

is usually the part of the wound closest to the torso. Your goal is to allow the body to form a clot in the bleeding blood vessel.

Bleeding in an extremity may sometimes be slowed by elevating the limb above the level of the heart, while still maintaining direct pressure. This decreases the blood pressure in the limb and, thus, the force by which blood leaves the body. Although this

strategy doesn't always work, it's unlikely to worsen the situation.

WHEN DIRECT PRESSURE DOESN'T WORK

It may become apparent very quickly that direct pressure is failing to slow or stop the bleeding. Bleeding

that doesn't respond to direct pressure and may become life-threatening is characterized by:

- ✱ Blood spurting or pouring out
- ✱ Clothes saturating with blood
- ✱ Amputation injury
- ✱ Victim becomes confused, disoriented or loses consciousness

In these cases, it's time to skip or abandon direct pressure and immediately place a tourniquet. Waiting will only cause further loss of precious oxygen-carrying blood.

For those with training, a curved instrument called a hemostat can be used to clamp a damaged vessel. This should only be done if you can easily reach and clearly visualize the point of bleeding. The vessel is then tied off with suture string. This isn't always possible, because transected veins and arteries may retreat into the soft tissue, especially in victims who are obese. If bleeding is controlled at this point, pack the wound, preferably with dressings made to achieve control of the bleeding (an action that's called hemostasis).

HEMOSTATIC DRESSINGS

Hemostatic dressings are best used in cases of severe bleeding. These products use materials that enhance or produce clotting. QuikClot uses kaolin, an original ingredient in Kaopectate. Celox and



Direct pressure is usually the go-to method to control bleeding, but it doesn't always work.

ChitoSam use chitosan, which comes from the shells of crustaceans. There are a number of others available. They usually come as dressings impregnated with the hemostatic substance. They are effective enough to stop bleeding even in large vessels, such as the femoral artery.

PACKING A BLEEDING WOUND

Many open wounds require packing. This is done directly on the bleeding blood vessel while maintaining firm pressure at all times. If you see blood coming from the top (closest to the torso) of a large wound, start packing there and apply firm and direct pressure. You're especially trying to pack against intact bone, for example, the humerus in the upper arm. This increases the effectiveness of the packing.

In order to pack a deep or wide wound:

- ✱ For best results, use specialized bleeding-control (hemostatic) gauze, such as QuikClot, Celox or ChitoSam. If not available, use clean gauze or cotton.

- ✱ Pack onto and toward the bleeding blood vessel directly.

- ✱ Keep two fingers firmly against the gauze in the wound and use one or two fingers of the other hand to push in successive folds of gauze.

- ✱ Quickly move the fingers inside the wound over the new folds of gauze to maintain pressure against the bleeding vessel.

- ✱ Add more folds quickly until the entire wound is filled to the skin surface.

- ✱ Maintain direct firm pressure on the bleeding vessel and its packing for at least 10 minutes (3 minutes for hemostatic gauze).

If you don't have special blood-clotting gauze, use plain bandages, dressings, or even clean cloth to pack the wound. Vacuum-packed dressings (also called compressed gauze) are so compact that it's easy to fit several into your pack.

If you are using hemostatic dressings like QuikClot and it becomes saturated with blood, remove and place a new one directly on the bleeding vessel. If you are using plain dressings, don't remove the dressings that are in place, even if soaked. Removing them may disturb forming clots. Just add more on top.

Packing of wounds with dressings is useful in many situations, but not all. Wounds of the neck, for example, are problematic due to the risk of compressing airways. Packing injuries in the abdomen, pelvis and chest may not be effective due to the depth of the bleeding vessels. This is one reason why, in an off-grid setting, the death rate from these wounds is so high. Statistics from the Civil War put mortality rates for major injuries in these regions at

KEEP THE PROPER SUPPLIES TO CONTROL BLEEDING IN EVERY FIRST-AID KIT.

close to 70%. This figure might also be expected in long-term austere settings.

If bleeding is controlled at this point, cover with a pressure bandage like the Israeli battle dressing, also called the emergency bandage, or a number of gauze pads covered with an elastic (Ace) wrap.

COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE TOURNIQUETS

As mentioned earlier, placing a tourniquet is often the best first course of action for heavy bleeding in extremities. Quite a few types have recently come onto the market.

Tourniquets are generally grouped in two categories:



Remember to protect yourself first. Take a second to put on nitrile gloves before dressing a wound. Doing so reduces the risk of infection to the patient, plus decreases your possible exposure to blood-borne pathogens.



**HEMOSTATIC
DRESSINGS
ARE AN
IMPORTANT
TOOL TO HAVE
ON HAND IF
YOU NEED TO
DEAL WITH A
TRAUMATIC
INJURY.**

Inflatable—pneumatic—and noninflatable, with the latter being more common for civilian use. Many of these can be applied by the victim with one hand if necessary. Some are approved by the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) guidelines used by the military. Your noninflatable choices include:

✱ **The CAT (combat application tourniquet)** The current generation of CAT tourniquets (Gen 7) has a wide 2.4-inch hook-and-loop fastener band and a one-handed hard plastic bar called a windlass. Once the tourniquet is placed 2 inches or more above the wound, the windlass is used to tighten the band. It is

then secured in place. Most with military experience were trained using this item.

✱ **The SOFTT-W (Special Operations Forces tactical tourniquet, wide)** Developed in response to concerns about the sturdiness of the plastic windlass in previous generations of the CAT tourniquet, the SOFTT-W has a windlass made of fuselage-grade aluminum.

✱ **The SAM XT extremity tourniquet** Designed by the maker of structural aluminum malleable (SAM) splints, the SAM XT is another option approved by the military. Slack is the main cause of failed tourniquet application;

SAM XT's buckle technology autolocks at a predetermined amount of circumferential force, eliminating nearly all tourniquet slack.

✱ **The SWAT tourniquet** SWAT stands for stretch, wrap and tuck. The SWAT tourniquet is a wide elastic band that can serve as a tourniquet or pressure dressing, and is very simple to use. It is compact, lightweight, inexpensive and effective on very small children or adults and animals. The SWAT is often carried as a backup to military-style tourniquets due to its versatility. A SWAT tourniquet is able to be placed higher than other tourniquets, and may be used to stop bleeding in the groin, shoulder, and axilla (armpit). It can serve as a pressure dressing, an elastic (Ace) wrap or a sling, and can also be used to stabilize splints. This is one of the few tourniquets that does not have a risk of pressure loss (re-bleeding) shortly after placement, as it maintains steady pressure to the tissue underneath.

✱ **The RMT-T (ratcheting medical tourniquet, tactical)** Another ratcheting-style (self-locking) tourniquet, the RMT-T is lightweight and compact, but is marketed, at present, mostly for law enforcement and military use. It is TCCC approved.

✱ **The TMT (tactical mechanical tourniquet)** The TMT claims to be faster than other tourniquets for both one- and two-handed use, with a wider band

AVOID LOOK-ALIKES

There are many products available online that are imitations of the real thing. Does it matter? In a study published in the summer 2023 issue of the *Journal of Special Operations Medicine*, the military-approved CAT (combat action tourniquet) was compared to a cheaper look-alike brand called MTET (military tactical emergency tourniquet).

Researchers took 50 combat medic (68W) instructors at Joint

Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston in Texas and directed them to self-apply either a MTET or CAT on their mid-thigh area. They were timed using one tourniquet on one leg, then the other on the other leg. Placement time target was 60 seconds, with a success confirmed by a sonogram showing cessation of arterial flow in the dorsalis pedis artery located on the top of the foot.

All 50 study volunteers were

successful in applying the CAT tourniquet in under 60 seconds. With the MTET, only 40 combat medics (80%) succeeded, with the MTET requiring a longer median time overall to complete the task. In addition, mechanical failures (14%) were encountered with the MTET in the form of bent windlass rods, ripped stitching or deformed buckles.

Lesson: With tourniquets, you get what you pay for, so spend the money.

and dual locking system to prevent pressure loss, a problem that occurs shortly after application of non-elastic tourniquets and may start re-bleeding. It's targeted for adults and older children, and is TCCC approved.

✱ **The TX2-inch and TX3-inch tourniquet** This is another wide-strap ratcheting tourniquet meant for rapid one- or two-handed use. It is TCCC approved.

✱ **The Parabelt** Made by the company that makes TX tourniquets, the Parabelt is a utility belt designed for daily wear that becomes a ratcheting tourniquet with a self-locking system when needed. It's available in several different sizes.

✱ **The RATS (rapid application tourniquet system)** The RATS tourniquet is essentially a flattened bungee cord that is wrapped around the extremity above the wound and then fitted into a metal clip to maintain pressure. Relatively inexpensive, it must be placed appropriately to avoid ligature effects on the skin. Each successive coil of the cord must be placed next to, not on top of, the first coil around the extremity. It's one of the few tourniquets that may work effectively on small children and pets.

THE ITCLAMP

Fully 38% of civilian bleeding injuries and 42% of battlefield wounds



involve the head and neck. Penetrating neck injuries are particularly concerning, as the death rate may be up to 50%. A simple item for hemorrhage control approved by the military's TCCC guidelines for head and neck bleeding is the iTClamp. The iTClamp is not a tourniquet, but a hemorrhage control device for use in the extremities, underarm, groin, scalp and neck, where wound edges are close together and tourniquet use is not an option.

The iTClamp works by closing the wound in one action. This action forms a collection of blood (hematoma) inside the wound cavity that generates pressure, which

reduces further blood loss. It is placed similarly to how you place a clamp to hold documents together. It's compact enough that several can be carried by the medic. An added benefit of the iTClamp is that it does not require additional direct pressure once deployed. Of course, in neck wounds, close monitoring of the airway is always important.

About the Author Joe Alton, M.D., is a physician, medical preparedness advocate, and New York Times/Amazon bestselling author of *The Survival Medicine Handbook: The Essential Guide For When Help Is NOT on the Way*. His website, doomandbloom.net, has over 1,500 articles.



HYDRATION

FINDING URBAN WATER

WHERE TO LOOK AND HOW TO COLLECT

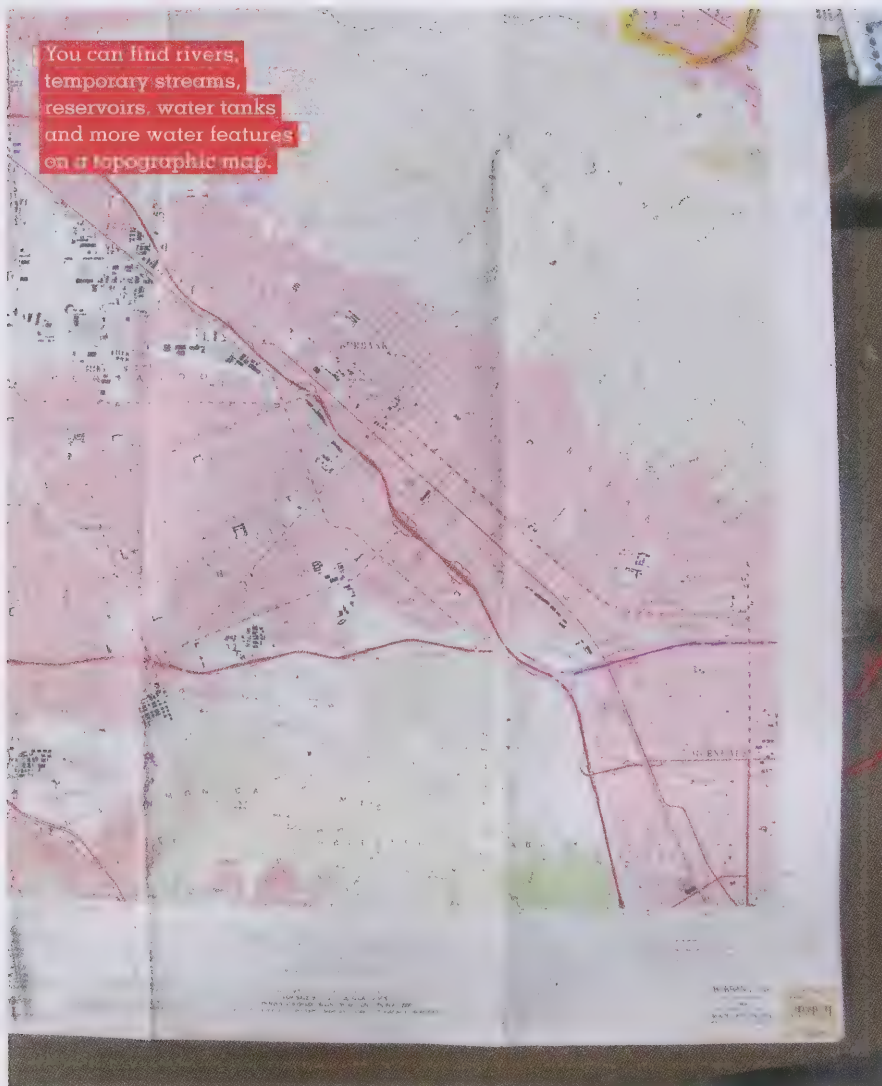
..... BY CHRISTOPHER NYERGES

If you don't have easy access
to a stream or pond, do you
know where to find water?



**EVEN IN
THE DIREST
SITUATION
WHERE
YOUR
WORLD IS
TURNED
UPSIDE
DOWN,
YOU NEED
H₂O. IT IS
THE MOST
ESSENTIAL
ELEMENT
FOR LIFE. IN
THE EVENT
OF SOME
URBAN
EMERGENCY,
IT MAY NOT
BE FLOWING
THROUGH
THE PIPES
THAT FEED
THE CITY.**

You can find rivers, temporary streams, reservoirs, water tanks and more water features on a topographic map.



Water is a critical survival need, so it is important to plan ahead by storing at least some amount of clean water for emergency use, as well as knowing where you can get more if needed.

LET'S EXPLORE WHERE you might get your water in the urban jungle.

WHERE IS THE WATER?

It's there, obviously, because all the people couldn't be living there if there wasn't any. But the streams and rivers and lakes are all too often cemented over, or in underground tubes. The water is there, but how do you find it?

Begin by purchasing a topographical map of wherever you live and examine it for any water features. On your map of your area, study it for all the places where water might be captured or held. Reservoirs are everywhere, and these are potential sources of water, obviously. Also, study the area where you live on Google Maps. Look for water features, fountains, swimming pools and reservoirs.

Take a visit to your local reservoirs and see how easy, or difficult, it might be to

extract some water. If there are several reservoirs near your town, go to several. It can be very easy to walk right up to these reservoirs, but not always. They may be fenced and locked, and some maybe hidden in plain view.

Reservoirs may or may not be a viable water source, depending on many factors. Keep in mind that everyone else in town might know about the reservoirs, so only expose yourself if absolutely necessary, and go to the reservoir with friends. Don't forget the weight of water: more than 8 pounds per gallon. Do you have buckets for carrying water? Can you carry it all the way to your home?

SWIMMING POOLS

Closer to home, there are likely swimming pools in your area. You can do a Google map search with the satellite view of your area and you'll see where pools are located in your neighborhood. These will hold water for some time after a disaster. You should get to know those neighbors who have pools. You can filter and boil any water for consumption. You'll also need water for bathing and first aid. And the closer to your home or base of operations the better, because of the weight and difficulty of transporting water.

FOUNTAINS

Ornamental fountains are another good emergency source of water. These

can be found in residential areas, public gardens and even commercial areas. The more you know about your area, the better. These may or may not be visible on a map, so you should always be alert to water features in your area, and mark them on your map.

IN AND AROUND THE HOME

Nearly every home has a water heater, and this has 30 to 40 gallons of usable water. If you are wise, you

drain a little bit of water from the water heater every few months. This helps get rid of sediment, and actually can extend the life of your water heater. But if you are like most people, you never do this and so when you turn on your drain to get water, nothing will come out! The bottom of the water heater is clogged with sediment, and you'll have to shove a skewer or a wire up the drain to open it. Keep in mind, too, that most businesses that have indoor plumbing will also have water heaters.

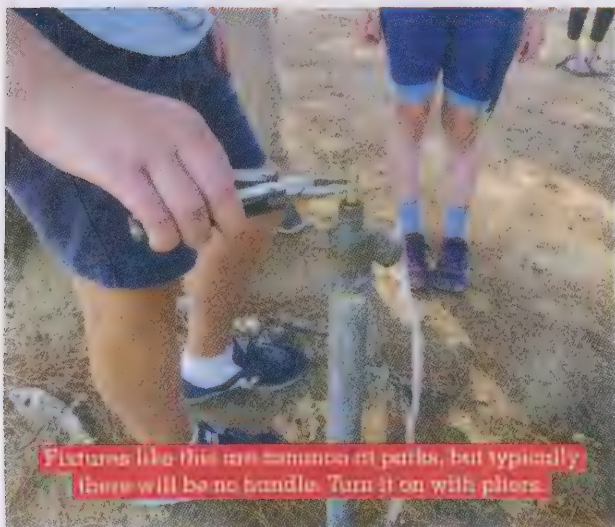
THERE ARE WATER HEATERS INSIDE MOST BUSINESSES, TOO.



These two common water keys are available right on the shelf at any hardware store.



Faucets like this are everywhere, and a simple water key, as shown, will open them.



Faucets like this are common at parties, but typically there will be no handle. Turn it on with pliers.



Here is an in-line shut-off valve. The line is closed when the handle is perpendicular to the line.

PURIFICATION METHODS

IF YOU COLLECT WATER UNDER ADVERSE CONDITIONS, YOU CAN'T BE CERTAIN THAT IT'S POTABLE.

HOW DO YOU PURIFY IT?

* Fire/Heat

Fire is the best way to kill all of the biological contaminants that might be in your water. You just need a pot and the ability to get a fire going. How long must you boil to kill all organisms? Since everything that gets you sick is dead at 160 to 170 degrees F, your water is good to go once you bring it to a boil. (There are some rare exceptions to this).

* The Sun

Yes, you can use the sun to purify your water; the water will be purified by a combination of the UV rays and heat. You can fill up quart-size glass jars and place them in the sun for a low-tech pasteurization. In general, about six hours in full sun was adequate for pasteurization. In

this case, the UV rays are enough to sterilize the water.

* Filters

There are many water filters available from backpacking stores or online. The Cadillac of water filters is the Katadyn, and the brand makes several models. Another popular choice is the Sawyer.

Other home sources of water include toilet tanks, ice cubes and obviously any stored water at the home.

AROUND TOWN

Water features are common in many urban areas, though you'd have to purify the water before using it.

There are also water spigots all throughout urban regions, usually hidden in plain sight. They are often under a ledge, or behind a little door. These are hose spigots where business owners attach a hose to wash the front of their store. If you know where these are, a sillcock key will allow you to turn on the water.

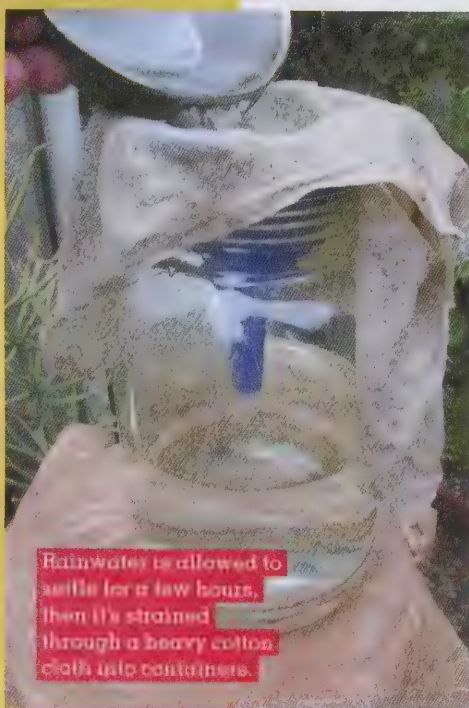
There are also hydrants and miscellaneous plumbing all throughout urban zones with which you should become familiar.

These might be related to irrigating lawns and golf courses, or they might be the fixtures that control water going into a building. Some of these fixtures have points where you can easily access the water, and some do not. If you cannot determine this, show it to a plumber friend to determine if you could access the water in an emergency.

Remember, if there is water flowing in the pipes, there is probably a way to access it, though you might need specialized tools.

NATURAL SOURCES

Most urban areas have streams, rivers, lakes and maybe even springs scattered around town. Study your topographical map to learn where they are. Keep the distance from your home in mind in case you





Rain can be easily collected in a variety of ways, typically as roof runoff.

end up needing to walk to and from the source.

RAIN

Always be ready to take advantage of the rain and put out your rain buckets. In an urban setting, your roof is your collector, and all the rain that hits that roof drips down to the gutters, and down to the downspouts. It's easy to get 30 gallons of rain in a downpour.

The first water from the storm will usually be dirty-looking, full of all manner

of debris washing off your roof, leaves and bird feces. If you don't keep your roof clean, let the first half-hour of rain clean your roof and then start collecting for consumption.

How do you process rainwater? Let it settle, and then carefully scoop it out of your bucket, cup by cup, and pour it through a fine cotton cloth. We typically put a funnel on top of our storage bottles, and lay a cotton cloth into that. The cotton helps to collect any fine debris, and then you should boil the water before use.

If your rainwater looks like dark tea, it might still be OK to drink if you really have nothing else, but you might consider setting it aside for other uses.

About the Author

Christopher Nyerges has been teaching self-reliance and survival skills since 1974. He is the founder of the School of Self-Reliance. He is also the author of 27 books, including Urban Survival Guide and How to Survive Anywhere, which include extensive sections on water.

UNLESS
YOU ARE
CERTAIN OF
ITS SAFETY,
FILTER OR
PURIFY
ALL WATER
SOURCED
AWAY FROM
HOME.



Many pets, dogs in particular, can be a great asset in a crisis.



CRITTERS

PREPPING WITH PETS

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THEM

BY JIM COBB

FOR MANY, OUR FOUR-LEGGED PALS ARE JUST AS MUCH A PART OF THE FAMILY AS ANY MEMBER WHO WALKS ON TWO LEGS. WE WOULD NO SOONER LEAVE A DOG OR CAT TO FEND FOR ITSELF AFTER A DISASTER THAN WE WOULD A CHILD. EVEN SO, AS WE GO ABOUT PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES, WE SOMETIMES OVERLOOK THE NEEDS OF OUR FURRY FRIENDS.

OUR CRITTERS RELY UPON us to provide their food, water and other necessities. Many breeds of dogs wouldn't be able to survive long on their own simply because they are unable to hunt very well. All of the selective breeding over the years has given them short legs, little to no snout, and other genetic modifications that serve no practical purpose. Odds are high that they would

just end up as dinner for something else.

For the purposes of this discussion, we're concentrating on dogs and cats, given that these are the two most popular choices for pets in the United States. The recommendations provided, though, are applicable across the board. Just tweak them a bit to suit your pet's individual needs.

WATER

As should be obvious, water is as important to animals as it is to humans. It is critical to account for the hydration needs of all of your pets as you calculate the water needs of the entire family or household. However, it is difficult if not impossible to recommend a specific amount of water to be stored for each



A small collapsible bowl is easy to pack and would be easier and cleaner

animal, given the vast size differences out there. A German shepherd is going to require more water on a daily basis than, say, a cocker spaniel.

One easy approach is to keep track of how much water your pets go through each day for three or four days and calculate an average. Multiply that by the number of days you feel you may end up on your own after a disaster and you'll know how much water to store. Consider tacking on a little extra as a cushion, just in case.

FOOD

There is a school of thought out there that says pet owners can just feed their animals people food during a disaster. "He'll eat whatever I eat," so the saying goes. There is a whole lot wrong with that line of thinking. Think back to the last time Fido got into the garbage. Odds are the digestive upset that followed wasn't pleasant. By feeding him portions of your own rations, you're not only reducing the number of calories available for yourself and the other human family members, but you're possibly depriving Spot of the nutrients he truly needs.

Just like people, animals can get upset stomachs from a rapid change in diet. Your best bet is to stick with their normal food for as long as possible. As with water, determine how much food you'll need to store by figuring a per-day average and multiplying



that by the number of days you want to cover.

If you're storing dry food, one great option is to use a 5-gallon pail and a Gamma lid. The pail can be sourced from a local restaurant, deli or bakery. A Gamma lid is a gadget that attaches to the top of the pail and provides an airtight screw-on lid. These are far easier to open than the snap-on lids that are usually used to seal these pails. Gamma lids can be found in several places online as well as many home improvement stores.

As you buy new bags of food, rotate the emergency supply out so you always have the freshest food possible stored. Dry food can go rancid if you don't use it, so just like our human food stash, rotation is key.

Canned food should also be used up and replenished regularly. Pay attention to best by dates and always

HEALTH DOCUMENTS

The next time you visit your veterinarian, ask them about providing you with a complete up to date record of each pet's immunizations. Keep a copy with your pet's emergency kit, just in case you need to seek shelter elsewhere. While few emergency shelters will accept pets, the ones that do may want to ensure your animals are up to date on all of their shots. Consider keeping a copy on your cell, too.

Periodically take a photo of you with your pet and keep the photo on your phone. Print out a copy and keep it with the immunization record. Not only will this photo be handy if, heaven forbid, you need to create a Lost Pet poster but if the animal is found the photo will go a long way toward proving ownership.

As best you can, feed your pets their normal food so as to hopefully avoid dietary upset.



IF YOU HAVE TO LEAVE A PET BEHIND, DON'T LEAVE THEM TIED UP.

use the oldest cans first. If your pet typically only eats half of a can and you'd keep the other half in the refrigerator for the next day, keep in mind that if the power is out, keeping the food cool might be difficult. If you can't buy smaller cans, you may end up having to throw away part of a can each day so you don't risk spoilage. Adjust your storage to accommodate this by increasing the number of cans kept on hand. And no, planning to eat the leftovers yourself is not a wise choice.

SANITATION

In an ideal world, any animals that would normally do their business outside will be able to do so during the crisis. Of course, in an ideal world, there wouldn't be disasters and all of this would just be for make-believe. The reality is there are any number of things that would cause your pups to decide that going out to the backyard is a bad idea.

One option is to pick up a kiddie pool when they go on clearance at the end of

the summer season. Should the need arise, the pool can be put on the floor in the basement or perhaps in a bedroom that will otherwise be kept unused for the duration. Line the bottom with newspapers and dispose of the waste in garbage bags. Alternatively, given time and opportunity, you could even line the bottom with sod pulled from the yard.

Any hard-surface floor will suffice, but the pool or something similar will help keep things contained. It might be difficult to convince the animal that it is OK to let loose since they've been told repeatedly not to do such things indoors but they'll figure it out eventually. Just have them on a leash and keep them in the pool or in the specific area until nature takes over and then praise them for it.

Consider investing in a cheap mop and bucket and a jug of floor cleanser to keep on hand for cleaning the pool regularly.

For cats, be sure to have plenty of cat litter available. If you run out of litter, you can try substituting shredded newspaper. Toss in some baking soda to help curtail odors. If that's not a viable option, you could bring in a shovelful or two of dirt or sand.

EVACUATION KIT

Every pet owner should assemble a small emergency kit for their critters in case of sudden evacuation. Use a duffel bag or small backpack and keep it stored in a closet or other location

where it will be easy to grab on the way out the door.

The kit should include:

- ✦ Food for two to three days
- ✦ Three to four bottles of water
- ✦ Collapsible or folding dishes
- ✦ Waste disposal bags
- ✦ Leash
- ✦ Extra collar
- ✦ Muzzle for each dog, often required in emergency shelters
- ✦ Small flashlight
- ✦ Small blanket
- ✦ A toy or something the pet can chew or play with
- ✦ Copy of immunization records

If you need to evacuate, make sure each animal has

a collar with proper tags. If you and the animal are separated, this will help reunite the two of you.

Keep the critter leashed and under your control. Fido might be spooked and will certainly pick up on any stress or anxiety you're feeling and will thus be a bit excitable.

Small animals might benefit from being placed in a carrier instead of being leashed. But keep in mind: Someone will have to carry that crate. If you're evacuating by car, no problem. If you end up on foot, though, that crate might get heavy quickly.

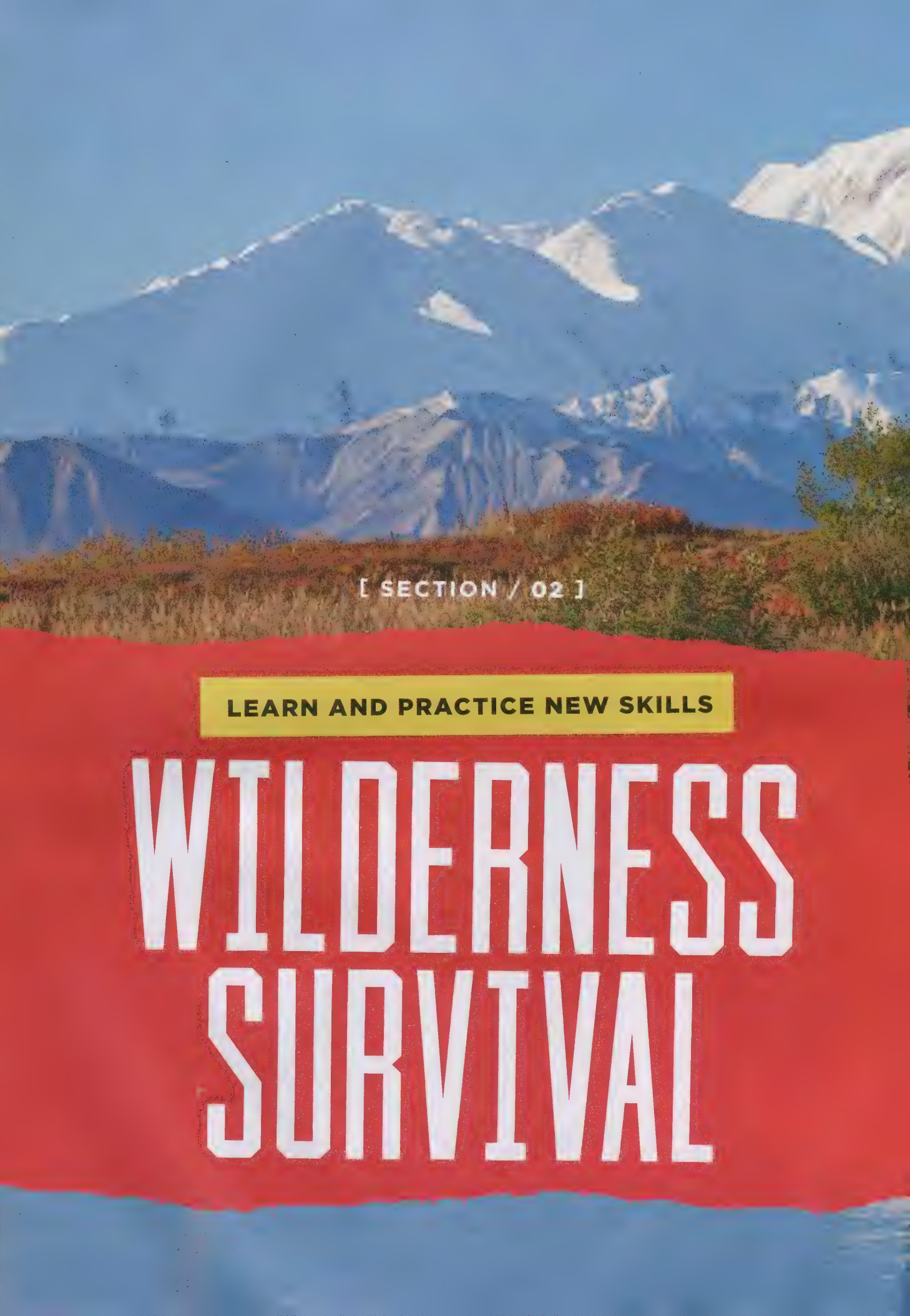
Our furry friends count on us to be there for them. Don't let them down!



You might consider asking your vet about calming medications you could keep on hand in case your pet gets too anxious during a long-term bad situation.



Many cat owners have trained their feline friends to walk on a leash.



[SECTION / 02]

LEARN AND PRACTICE NEW SKILLS

WILDERNESS SURVIVAL





SAFETY

THE TRIALS OF THE TRAIL

PRECAUTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA

HIKING IS A GREAT WAY TO INTERACT WITH NATURE, EXERCISE YOUR BODY AND CLEAR YOUR MIND OF THE DAY'S STRESSFUL EVENTS. ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF MILES OF TRAILS CARVED THROUGHOUT THE MOUNTAINS, ACROSS THE PLAINS, AND DEEP WITHIN THE FORESTS THAT OFFER YOU A FEW HOURS OR A FEW DAYS TO ESCAPE FROM YOUR NORMAL NINE-TO-FIVE ROUTINE.



HOWEVER, NATURE CAN be volatile. There are numerous safety concerns that one should consider prior to stepping out of your front door and venturing into the unpredictability of nature. From rapid weather changes to the interaction with animals—both four- and two-legged varieties—to injuries incurred on the trail, what started out as a simple walk can quickly spiral into something bad.

Here, we'll explore all aspects of the seemingly innocent hike, from preparation to precautions to what you should do if unexpected hazards come your way.

GOING OFF-COURSE

The first danger of hiking is one that most people will not admit would be a problem, and that's getting lost while on their hike.

This has to do with ego and overconfidence with themselves. That mentality can cost them a lot when daylight starts fading and the eerie night begins to appear. Now, what causes someone to get lost—and why would they, if they are in familiar territory? One cause is the need for variety. If someone follows the same path with the same scenery for numerous trips, then they may want to try something new. This new path may not be well marked, or not marked at all. Overconfidence with their past success on their known route may cause a hiker to stray without knowing the length, difficulty or terrain of

Spending time with
Mother Nature is
rewarding, provided
you use common sense.



Getting hurt can happen easily, so you need to know how to handle common types of injuries.

cause the hiker to make a crucial wrong turn. Any possible reason to get lost can be avoided by carrying a GPS handheld device. This unit, no larger than a cellphone, can show you the routes around you and plot a course for home. Additionally, some models also offer an emergency setting so you can signal for help if injured and need immediate attention.

ACCIDENTS

Injuries can happen while on your hike. No one can predict them—that's why they're called accidents—but you can prepare for them. Having a GPS signaling device or satellite phone, especially when deep in the outdoors, can get help to your location with just the push of a button or two. Those people who feel their cellphone is enough may get a rude awakening when they see no service bars on the display.

The types of injuries that can occur on the trail include twisted ankles, cuts and abrasions, sunburn, and insect and animal bites. These, luckily, are not life-threatening, and can be tended to by yourself with a compact first-aid kit. These kits can be found in stores and online and come equipped with most items needed for basic first aid. They can be stored in your pack, or if traveling light, within a fanny pouch or even within your jacket or pants pocket. To prevent sunburn or lip blistering, be sure to coat your exposed skin and lips with sunscreen

CARRY AT LEAST BASIC-LEVEL SURVIVAL GEAR WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.

their new option. Once they feel overtaxed by the new setting, panic can set in, followed by poor decision-making—and before they know it, they are lost.

Another reason may be distraction. If a person goes hiking while dealing with heavy stress, problems in their mind or conflict about some important decision they have to make, they become distracted from the task at hand, which is hiking on their known route. Although muscle memory can guide them without thinking, when the mind is occupied, this can fail and

and lip balm, respectively. Neither are bulky to carry, so that's a plus.

NATURE'S TENANTS

There will be critters in the woods, under rocks, buzzing around your head, and possibly lounging across the trail. Biting mosquitoes and biting flies can be relentless. As you scratch bites, skin is broken and the chance of infection can increase. Bug sprays should be applied generously on any exposed skin. Reapply as necessary. When possible, wear clothing that covers as

much of your body as the weather permits.

Snakes may be startled if you step on a rock that they are using for cover and strike. A non-venomous bite can be treated on site, but a venomous one needs professional attention. Larger predatory animals may think of you as a possible meal. Sprays are available that deliver a bear-size dose of pepper spray. With coyotes and wolves, be the aggressor. Stand tall, make a lot of noise, and wave a stick (a walking stick with a shaved point taken on your hike is a sound idea). This will most likely cause them to turn and run.

Bear spray is highly recommended.



Check on the park's website or speak to someone there about the wildlife dangers that might be present during your visit to the area and plan ahead for how to handle them.



While most animals are more fearful of you than you are of them, their fear can make them dangerous to you



Spending time in nature can be relaxing and centering, but take commonsense safety precautions.

THE BENEFITS OF SOLO HIKING

MANY TIMES, THE PROBLEMS THAT CAN ARISE FROM HIKING ALONE ARE DISCUSSED AND EMPHASIZED. HOWEVER, SOME TRUE BENEFITS SHOULD ALSO BE MENTIONED.

* Time To Think

Life is stressful and can be overwhelming during a hectic day. While hiking alone, you can sort out problems, focus on the priorities in your life, and create a solid plan moving forward.

* Travel At Your Own Pace

When in a group hike, you need to match the rate of travel with the other

hikers. They may be way too fast or slow as molasses, which can be frustrating. Alone, you set your own pace and alter it whenever you want.

* Improve Your Independence

Who says you need someone else with you to go for a walk in the wilderness? You don't need to conform to others' schedules or calendar. You decide

when, where and how long you will hike, and you won't miss out because of someone else dictating every move.

* Gain Confidence

Going solo gives a person a feeling of self-reliance when they successfully complete a hike. Being able to set goals for the day and execute them well is a true confidence booster.

TWO-LEGGED PREDATORS

Unfortunately, a hiker, especially a young woman or teen, can become a target for an attacker. The woods surrounding a trail can provide cover for the predator to watch their victim and find the perfect spot to attack. They will have the element of surprise on their side. Their advantage is even greater if the hiker is lost in thought, with earbuds in their ears and music drowning out any noise. There are numerous devices to aid a hiker if attacked.

These include both signaling gadgets and self-defense weapons. Personal alarms, with the activation being either a push button or a corded loop around the wearer's wrist, can activate a high decibel sound to scare off an assailant. Some of the aforementioned GPS units have a one-touch emergency button that notifies authorities in case of trouble.

As for weapons, there are irritants like pepper spray that can be blasted into an attacker's face, giving you time to run or hide. Be aware that gimmick weapons, like stun rings and hand claws, may fail under real-life scenarios. Any defense product should be tested by the user and researched thoroughly. Not all products are equal and can give a false sense of security for the hiker.

WEATHER CONCERNS

No one can perfectly predict the weather. One moment you are hiking under sunny skies and the next a downpour drenches you from head to toe. This may appear just to be an inconvenience but it can have some serious consequences. If you are wet and there is a chill in the air with a steady breeze, you are susceptible to hypothermia. This is a condition where your core body temperature drops and can lead to death if not treated.

Additionally, that same downpour can create hazardous conditions on the trail, turning a solid

path into a muddy slipping hazard. A lightning storm while you are hiking under tall trees is another bad scenario. A lightning bolt could strike a tree near you and its ground charge (the electricity that travels down the tree and throughout the adjacent ground level) could hit you. A simple solution to most of these issues is being prepared. You should carry a waterproof light jacket, ideally with a hood, with you. During a lightning storm, find a shelter away from trees until it passes.

THINK SMART

Though there are many dangers that can accompany a simple hike

in the wilderness, you don't have to be paranoid or worried during your time out in nature. Knowing the risks and the worst-case scenarios prior to venturing out can help you prepare for the unexpected and allow you to enjoy nature's backyard to the fullest.

Author Michael D'Angona is a freelance writer, author, martial artist and survival skill practitioner. He has published hundreds of articles encompassing such topics as self-defense, preparedness and outdoor skills. He currently offers magazine writing services and instructional videos at mjd-writersresource.wixsite.com/my-site

EXPERIENCE
IS A GREAT
TEACHER,
BUT THE
LESSONS
MIGHT BE
HARD-WON.
BE CAREFUL
OUT ON
THE TRAIL.



Make sure someone knows
where you're going and
when you expect to be back.



ASSESSMENT

WHAT TO PACK

TESTING YOUR KIT AND YOUR SKILLS

BY REUBEN BOLTON

Prepare for an unexpected overnight stay. Consider using a possible pouch for ample space and organization.



IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT HAVING A KIT IS ONLY PART OF THE EQUATION. WITHOUT PUTTING IT TO PRACTICAL USE, IT WON'T DO MUCH GOOD. SO, APPLY WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR KIT.

READY TO PUT YOUR

survival skills to the test? Why not try a mock, real-world survival outing with your kit? It's the perfect way to challenge yourself and see if you're truly prepared for any situation.

ESSENTIALS

Survival expert Dave Canterbury's 5 C's and 10 C's are a must-have for survivalists and bushcraft enthusiasts. The 5 C's include cutting tool(s), a cover, a container, a combustible, and cordage. The remaining 5 C's are a candle, a cotton bandanna, a compass, cloth tape, and a canvas sail needle. Depending on the user's needs, these items can be substituted or interpreted in various ways. It's crucial to have a container for water and a cutting tool for survival. Additionally, signaling via a whistle or signal mirror is an essential skill to practice regularly.



The Tuff Possum Gear Belt Pouch fits belts up to 2 inches wide and has a sturdy zipper.

A PLASTIC TRASH BAG HAS MANY SURVIVAL USES.



The inside of the pouch has just the right number of list items.

POUCHES

It's crucial to select a material that can withstand the elements and rough handling for storing your survival gear. Cordura or leather are excellent options for their durability. I highly recommend using pouches for carrying your gear in the wilderness. However, don't limit yourself to store-bought or custom pouches. Leather can also protect from snow and rain, and it's more water-resistant than people often assume, making it a reliable choice. While nylon or open-top pouches may get wet, most of the gear listed in the 10 C's doesn't necessarily need to be waterproof. It's essential to keep items like tinder, matches or lighters dry, but a ferrocerium rod will be fine even if it gets wet. Remember to choose a pouch with a reliable zipper, as zippers can eventually fail. I've been impressed with the Tuff Possum Gear Belt Pouch.

When carrying essential items, I prefer a small and lightweight pouch. The Tuff Possum Gear Belt Pouch—measuring 5 inches in width, 4 inches in height and 3 inches in depth—is a great option that weighs in at just 2 ounces. It's made of durable 1,000-denier Cordura nylon and features a heavy-duty No. 8 YKK zipper with 550 cord zipper pulls. Despite its small size, this pouch is unquestionably robust and reliable. Whether you're out in the wilderness or just going about your day, this pouch will last for years.

During winter, it is more convenient to use over-the-shoulder pouches that can accommodate several layers of clothing. However, belt pouches are the way to go in summer since they are easily accessible even with a single base layer covering them, such as a shirt.

SURVIVAL KITS

Outdoor enthusiasts have long been intrigued by survival kits for their outings. While mini-kits remain a go-to option for emergencies, they may only provide some of the necessary provisions for more extended stays. On

the other hand, relying solely on comprehensive “everything-kits” may lead to a lack of practical skills and training. Therefore, campers need to strike a balance between utilizing kits and practicing realistic camping techniques.

There are numerous options for survival kits available, but not all of them are beneficial. Some low-cost kits may be composed of disposable items from China. If you opt for a preassembled kit, ensure that it includes the basic necessities such as fire starters, navigation tools, signaling devices and water purification methods. Later, you can

add extras such as a space blanket, cordage and cutting tools. Adventure Medical Kits offers numerous prepackaged options, but I prefer the brand’s simpler kits as they allow for customization. Several reputable survival/ bushcraft schools offer kits with substantial pieces and pouches that enable you to create your own kit. I prefer to make my kit with only the necessities. My motto is: “If you don’t have it, you probably don’t need it.” Having less gear and more skill and practice is more valuable than having a lot of gear. Regardless of your chosen kit, the most important thing is to use it.

THE BEST
GEAR IN
THE WORLD
WON'T BE
MUCH GOOD
TO YOU IF
YOU DON'T
KNOW HOW
TO USE IT
PROPERLY.



A survival camp made with a Swiss Army knife, cordage, a space blanket and dry wood.

SHELTER

When choosing a camp spot, look for an area with a suitable wood supply, water source, and a large boulder for heat reflection and windbreak. Facing southeast can also

maximize exposure to the sun's warmth.

Proper shelter is essential for staying safe in the wilderness. In the book of C's, shelter is cover. Whether homemade or store-bought, having a shelter in a small kit is crucial. Shelter is the hardest thing to accomplish

in a survival kit, so make sure you have it covered.

A Mylar space blanket can be a compact and primary option, but it can be challenging to set up. Try setting it up in a lean-to shape using small stones or branches as tie-off points. Set it up between two trees or use waist-high branches as support if possible. Use a smooth stick underneath for extra headroom and to shed snow and water. Insulation is also important, so consider stuffing a large trash bag with debris for a mattress. Stuff it, then sit on it. Then stuff it again. Repeat until you have a very compact, dense mattress.

This type of shelter works best with a long fire in front—keeping the fire about one step from the shelter—in cold weather, but ground insulation is the name of the game in all weather.

Remember to practice setting up your shelter before heading out.



The flashlight clips to a belt like a headlamp. Duct tape wrapped around a straw offers a place for nails to be carried.



The Mini-Bie lighter has two lit accelerants, while the Gorilla Duct Tape is wrapped around a straw.

HYDRATION

During the warmer months, staying hydrated can become challenging, especially when it involves boiling water in a metal container. It's not pleasant to drink hot water in the summer. Drinking enough water to keep the body hydrated is essential, but doing so can be a hassle if the process is inconvenient.

I always keep water-purifying iodine tablets with me to avoid having to drink hot water in the summer. However, in winter, it's a welcomed activity as you get warmth and

hydration simultaneously. These tablets are incredibly effective, even when I collected my drinking water from a river where water buffaloes bathed in the Philippines! I have a few pouches that hold a small metal cup from a Vienna sausage can that weighs almost nothing. That is another C, my container—one of the hardest things to duplicate in nature.

EXTRAS

As a prepared outdoors enthusiast, I always carry a trusty tube of Carmex. This versatile lip balm serves many purposes: It's an accelerant when rubbed on dry cotton balls, protects my lips and wounds, and even lubricates my bow-drill socket. The soft tube gradually shrinks as I use it, leaving more room in my pouch for additional tinder. I keep my tools in tip-top shape by carrying a compact ceramic sharpener. Additionally, I take a stick of fatwood and a folded piece of foil, all of which are part of my essential 10 C's kit.

PERSONALIZE IT

Make it your own. Get creative and think of your kit as your trousers and shirt or jacket pockets. Some small backpacking/survival tarps can fit in a cargo or shirt pocket and are better than a Mylar space blanket. Belt loops can have carabiners attached with extra emergency gear. Belts and hats from Wazoo Survival Gear are made



A small plastic bag can hold matches, birch bark, cotton balls and a Tinder Tuli.

to carry essentials while wearing them. There are so many possibilities out there.

Outdoor activities necessitate prior knowledge and experience, both of which are undeniably helpful. With the proper preparation and equipment, you can conquer any challenge that Mother Nature might present. So, how will you utilize your kit to ensure your safety and success in the great outdoors?

About the Author

Reuben Bolieu is a passionate adventurer who explores remote and exotic places. He shares his expertise in survival and woodcraft through his writing, photography and knowledge in classes and outdoor magazines.

REDUNDANT KIT ITEMS

When it comes to both fire-starting and cutting tools, redundancy is highly recommended. One way doesn't cut it. Two to three methods of starting or maintaining a fire are crucial. Heat is an essential element in an outdoor survival experience. Having a lighter, matches, and a ferrocerium rod is a good start. But think accelerants like hand sanitizer, Carmex, birch bark, a rubber inner tube, manufactured cotton with Vaseline, and the like.

Cutting tools are another place to be redundant. I always have a Victorinox Camper in my possibles pouch, giving me a sharp slicer and a small saw.

Extras can include a folding saw for larger wood or a fixed-blade knife for ultra-dependability. Make it your own, and make it fun!

A man with a beard, wearing a tan baseball cap with an "ESEE" logo, a dark jacket, and tan pants, is crouching in a forest. He is holding a thin branch or sapling with his right hand, and his left hand is near the ground, possibly adjusting a trap. The background shows many thin tree trunks and some dry leaves on the ground.

Building a twitch-up trap in a survival class using a taut sapling or branch as the engine with a snare attached.

Disclaimer

Primitive trapping is the use of body-gripping traps, such as snares, deadfalls or spring traps, to capture and kill animals for their fur or meat. Primitive trapping is illegal in most U.S. states, as it is considered cruel, inhumane and indiscriminate. Primitive trapping can cause severe injuries, prolonged suffering and death to both target and non-target animals, including endangered species and pets. Primitive trapping can also damage the ecosystem by disrupting the natural balance of predators and prey. These techniques should be used for the practice of knife skills and during a real survival situation only.



SUSTENANCE

TRAPPING 101

LEARN THE BASICS FOR
SNARING YOUR NEXT MEAL

■■■■■■■■■■ BY REUBEN BOLIEU ■■■■■■■■■■

■■■■■■■■■■

WITH THE RIGHT APPROACH, IT CAN YIELD GREAT RESULTS. WHETHER YOU'RE A SEASONED TRAPPER OR JUST A BEGINNER, UNDERSTANDING THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL TRAPPING, FROM TRAP SELECTION TO TRAP PLACEMENT, IS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS.

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THIS ARTICLE WILL explore the fundamentals of mammal trapping and discuss what it takes to truly acquire protein in the wild. Let's dive in and discover the secrets of successful mammal trapping.

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ESSENTIALS

To catch dinner through trapping, one requires a few essential things. First, the trap must be set in the right location where the target animal is known to frequent. Second, the trap must be camouflaged well enough to avoid scaring off the animal. Third, the trap must be baited with something the

animal finds irresistible. And last, the trapper needs to be patient and wait for the animal to fall into the trap.

■■■■■■■■■■

TRAP VARIETIES

There are several varieties of traps to consider.

- ✱ Deadfalls or crushing-style traps fall under the category of mangle traps.
- ✱ Strangle traps are any type of trap that uses a snare to capture prey.
- ✱ Dangle traps involve taking prey into the air using a sapling or rubber tube as an engine. When used with



The trap's location is critical to the success of the trap. You can't just place them anywhere and hope to catch something.

a snare, it both strangles and dangles the game.

✱ Tangle traps include commercially available nets or those made from natural materials that trap the prey, leaving it up to us to do the killing.

RULES

When setting traps, it is crucial to make them solid and well constructed.

Shortcuts can result in a weak, useless trap that won't catch anything. Animals will fight for survival and can even chew off their limbs to escape, so ensuring the trap is secure and won't fail is crucial. A poorly constructed trap can result in the loss of a meal or, even worse, a trapped animal that can't be retrieved. Most likely, this can be a death sentence for the animal, as it may be unable to eat or drink and may

fall prey to predators. The trap setter is responsible for ensuring that the traps are secure and effective so that nothing is wasted.

DISTURBANCE

It is vital to refrain from disrupting the environment. I have learned from years of experience that the quality and placement of a trap are only relevant if the fundamental rules are adhered to. In the past, I made the mistake of constructing traps too close to the location I wanted to target—and even worse, I would often engage in conversation with others, alerting the animal I was pursuing (a squirrel, in this particular scenario).

Minimizing your human scent is necessary for successful trapping. Handle the traps and anything in the designated area as little as possible to avoid leaving your scent behind. If you cannot build a campfire to smoke the trap, rub the trap parts in the dirt as a last resort. Remember, hiding your scent is the key to catching your prey.

When setting a trap, it's essential to camouflage it using natural materials found in the surrounding area. However, be cautious of using freshly cut wood pieces, whether green or dry. These pieces stand out and draw attention to the new landscape created by the trap. Instead, avoid detection by using materials that blend in with the environment.

Setting just one trap is not enough. Set four



A tired student assembles a figure-four trap during a five-day field survival class, emphasizing the importance of practicing these skills beforehand.

In minutes, you can easily make a two-stick deadfall trap with a trigger or baited end using a Swiss Army knife.



traps or more to increase your chances of catching something. Keep them as simple and efficient as possible, because fancy traps won't give you more survival points. Remember, in survival, simple is always better.

Most of the traps discussed here are meant to catch small game because they are easier to trap, transport and prepare.

TRAP SELECTION & PLACEMENT

Successful mammal trapping requires careful consideration of several key factors, including trap selection and placement.

When choosing a trap, it's crucial to consider the target species and their behavior. Different animals may require various traps, such as foothold, body grip or snare traps. Choosing a humane and effective trap with a trigger mechanism that is sensitive enough to capture the animal without causing unnecessary harm is paramount.

Proper placement is critical once you have selected the appropriate trap. Factors to consider when placing a trap include the animal's behavior and movement patterns, as well as the surrounding habitat and environmental conditions. For example, some animals may be more likely to travel along specific

DO WHAT
YOU CAN TO
MINIMIZE
LEAVING YOUR
SCENT ON
OR NEAR THE
TRAPS YOU SET.



THESE METHODS CAN PUT MEAT ON THE TABLE.



routes or through particular areas, and traps should be placed accordingly. Additionally, traps should be set in areas with high animal activity, such as near feeding or nesting sites.

Game trails used by rabbits and other small mammals are ideal locations for setting up traps. It's crucial to observe scat and signs of disturbance, such as tracks. These areas do not require bait. In the case of wire snares, it's essential to position the snare at the entrance of an animal hole. Critters can be snared as they exit or when they are chased into their dwelling.

Proper trap placement can also help to minimize non-target captures, such as unintended species or domestic animals. Traps should be set in areas where non-target captures are less likely, and checked frequently to avoid prolonged exposure and unnecessary suffering.

SPRING TRAP

The twitch-up trap is the most widely used type of lifting trap in the world, and it can be found in various regions under different names. Regardless of location, the trap's purpose remains the same: to ensnare and lift an animal off the ground, typically using a bent green sapling or branch. There are several methods for constructing this trap, but the simplest approach often yields the best results. To create this trap, you will need a flexible green stick or a bent green sapling, which should be



around 5 feet long. You will also require vines or any other kind of cordage, along with two L7 trigger parts and a snare loop.

DEADFALL TRAP

In survival situations, a deadfall is a valuable tool for catching animals of various sizes. While in the jungle, I encountered many complex deadfalls designed to catch small deer and even jaguars. The tried-and-true figure-four trap is an effective option for smaller animals like rabbits, squirrels and armadillos. I have personally tasted the delicious meat of jungle rats caught using this method, and it remains one of the best jungle meats I've ever had.

The Paiute deadfall is a trap used for catching

small game. It consists of a heavy deadfall balanced on two upright sticks with a trigger mechanism that releases the deadfall stone or log when the prey takes the bait. It is a simple and effective trap that survivalists have used for centuries. In addition to its practical uses, it has been featured in literature and films as a quintessential tool for survival in the wilderness.

Trapping is a good exercise in observation, awareness and patience. Success involves carefully considering trap selection and placement. By choosing the appropriate trap and setting it in the right location, trappers can increase their chances of catching the target species while minimizing the risk of unintended captures.

HUNTING VS. TRAPPING?

For generations, the debate between using traps and hunting to acquire food has continued. Hunting demands skills and knowledge that many urban dwellers lack, and the pursuit of animals can be physically taxing, resulting in a significant expenditure of calories. On the other hand, crafting traps can be a more efficient and less strenuous method of obtaining food, as it requires less physical exertion while providing a mental challenge. It is wise to practice trap-making beforehand, ensuring they are readily available when needed. By setting traps, we can concentrate on other critical tasks related to camping or survival while still procuring food for sustenance.



[SECTION / 03]

PROTECT YOURSELF & YOUR LOVED ONES

SECURITY & DEFENSE



The best defense to home
invasions will involve
strategies to convince
them to move to an
easier target elsewhere.





HOME SECURITY

PROTECTING YOUR CASTLE

BECAUSE MOATS ARE TOO EXPENSIVE

BY ERIK WINCHESTER

SAFEGUARDING YOUR ASSETS, INCLUDING YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES, TAKES MORE THAN JUST FIREARMS AND THE WILL TO USE THEM. IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE, YOU NEED A MULTIPRONGED APPROACH, INCORPORATING AN ARRAY OF ELEMENTS THAT WORK TOGETHER.



While home defense is important, it shouldn't be the only tool in your security toolbox. Think of it as the last resort, rather than your primary option.

A TRULY COMPREHENSIVE security plan will cover three basic layers. First, it will have elements intended to deter home invasions and other crimes. Second, it will involve some sort of delay tactics, designed to increase the amount of time it will take for the burglar or other bad guy to reach their goal. Finally, it will include defense, which may involve the use of firearms or other weaponry.

For our purposes here, we're concentrating on the first two layers of the plan.

PROFESSIONAL OR DIY SYSTEMS

The first decision to make is whether you want to handle this yourself or pay a company to step in and handle the arrangements and monitoring. There are

a number of great, reliable outfits that will do an outstanding job outfitting your home and other structures with all manner of security devices, then let you know immediately if anything is amiss. However, that comes at a price and it isn't cheap. That said, it might be worth the expense, especially if you have family members who aren't perhaps as agile as they once were and who are home alone often. Having a second set of eyes, so to speak, could be lifesaving.

On the other hand, with all of the technological advances available today, it isn't that difficult to put together a security system on your own, one that incorporates several levels of alerts and surveillance. Even entry-level equipment is light-years beyond what it was just a few years ago.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with a hybrid approach. Contract a basic level of service with a security company, then add in a few bits of gear of your own to augment as needed. Just make sure that whatever you decide to purchase and use won't interfere with the company's equipment.

While this might be an oversimplification, there are two types of devices involved with a security system. Security monitoring gear detects and alerts you to the presence of burglars and such, while environmental monitoring equipment is primarily concerned with nonhuman threats, such as fire, smoke and flooding. Smart home automation devices, such as timers for lights or apps that let you control locks, are also certainly beneficial.



Camera systems allow you to see almost everywhere at once.

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

One of the best first layers of security is adequate lighting outside the home. Those who wish to do harm to you and yours don't want to be seen doing so. You don't need to have your property look like a landing strip at LAX, of course, but you'll want to be able to see what's happening around you. At a minimum, install motion-activated lights at every door.

These lights can also serve as an alarm of sorts, but only if you're paying attention and act upon them. If the light in the backyard goes on in the middle of the night, as much as you'd rather roll over and



go back to sleep, you might want to get up and see what activated it. Odds are, it'll be a raccoon or some other critter, but if the critter is walking on two legs and carrying a crowbar, you'll probably want to know that.

CAMERAS

It seems like every house has a doorbell camera today. Some models incorporate an intercom system, so you can speak with the person at the door even if you're not home. They're available as either hard-wired models or battery-powered ones. The former typically allow for more options than the battery ones, including 24/7 recording. If you already have a hard-wired doorbell, then swapping it out for a video-equipped one is fairly simple. How

do you tell? Unscrew the doorbell button. If you see it is attached to two wires in the wall, you're good to go. Just follow the installation instructions in the box for the new unit.

The battery-powered models require you to periodically charge the battery. Because of that, they are generally easy to remove. Charge it via USB, then replace it on the door frame.

Once you have the camera—as well as the corresponding app—installed, you'll want to play around with the settings so it isn't activated by things like a nearby wind chime swaying in the breeze.

These doorbell cameras are great to have, but they are only one part of the equation. Consider installing additional cameras in areas of the home you might want

to be able to see remotely, such as the hallway coming into the home and on the gun safe.

If at all possible, choose a camera or camera system that will not only alert your phone if motion is detected,

**DO WHAT YOU
CAN TO DETER
THE CRIME
BEFORE IT
TAKES PLACE.**



MOTION-SENSITIVE OUTDOOR LIGHTS CAN ALERT YOU TO THE PRESENCE OF SOMEONE UNWANTED OUTSIDE.

but will also store the video footage remotely. If the images or video is stored on the camera itself, such as on an SD card, all the thief has to do is take the camera along with your valuables.

Make sure the camera has low-light capability, so you'll be able to see what's happening at night. Depending on your needs, a so-called nanny cam might be worthwhile. These are cameras that are hidden inside other objects, such as DVD players, lamps or clocks. Avoid ones that are battery-powered, as they don't tend to be quite as reliable as the models that use an outlet.

ALARMS

The point of an alarm is simple—to let you know something needs your

attention. A good security system will use a few different types of devices.

Motion sensors will detect movement in an area. These usually have settings you can adjust for sensitivity, but also keep their location and field of detection in mind. If you have dogs, for example, you might want to adjust the angle so that it won't go off every time Fido walks by. There is a bit of trial and error involved with motion detection devices, whether they are alarms, lights or something else.

Window alarms, when armed, will alert when the window has been opened. Many of these devices use magnets. Basically, a magnet is attached to the window pane. Inside the sensor on the window frame are two wires. When the magnet is close to the

sensor, it pulls the wires together, completing an electrical circuit. When the magnetic energy goes away, such as when the window is opened, the wires move apart, breaking the circuit and activating the alarm. Door alarms often work on the same principle.

But what if the burglar doesn't open the window and just shatters the glass to get inside? No worries: There's an alarm for that. Aptly named a glass breakage alarm, these work in one of two ways. Some models use shock sensors and will sound off if vibrations are detected on the glass. The downside is that if you slam a door and it rattles the window, that might set off the alarm.

The other type of breakage alarm will detect sound waves that are typical of glass breaking. A tiny microphone constantly monitors for specific frequencies and, if it hears them, it sounds off.

One more type of alarm you might consider is the pendant. This is a device that is worn around the neck and that can be used to signal for help. There are models available that require no internet or telephone access. However, these alarms typically won't summon police or rescue services. Rather, they send an alert to a handheld receiver that is carried by an on-site caregiver. The range is usually about 200 feet or so.

Other pendants will use cellular networks to contact the authorities, or they can be programmed to call specific individual

Many cameras offer access via apps so you can watch what's happening from wherever you happen to be.

Alarm

phone numbers and then use an internal microphone and speaker so you can speak back and forth. If you go this route, you might pick up a couple of extra pendants, leaving one in the bathroom and another in the bedroom to be backups for the one being worn, just in case.

All too often, people think security begins and ends with a firearm or other weapon. Truth be told, there's a lot more involved if you want a truly complete protection system in place.

About the Author *Erik Winchester spent close to two decades working in the security and investigation fields before retiring and becoming a freelance writer and consultant.*



WHAT TO ASK A SECURITY COMPANY

IF YOU'RE CONSIDERING CONTRACTING WITH A COMPANY TO HANDLE SECURITY MONITORING AND SIMILAR SERVICES, THERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK. BE LEERY OF ANY COMPANY THAT HESITATES TO ANSWER ANY OF THESE.

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| 1) Is the company licensed? The state typically handles licensure for security contractors. Ask for their license number, then double-check by looking up the information online. | means a lot in this arena. The longer they've been working in the industry, the better. | protect their clients? Beyond the security measures they put into place, they should be doing things like performing full background checks on all employees, use licensed contractors for installation and have comprehensive liability insurance. | 5) What warranties are in place for the equipment? Every bit of gear installed should be guaranteed for at least a couple of years, if not longer. If something fails to work, what will the company do about it? | companies will require a contract, usually two or three years. If there's a fair chance you'll be moving before that time period ends, be sure you understand your obligations, as well as theirs. Some companies may allow you to transfer your service to the new home. |
| 2) How long have they been in business? Experience | 3) What is their average response time? If an alarm goes off, they should be responding to it in less than a minute. | | 6) What happens if you move? Most | |
| | 4) How do they | | | |

Try to stick with classes that concentrate on real-world scenarios



MARTIAL ARTS

SPEED COURSE TO SELF-DEFENSE

HOW TO HONE YOUR SKILLS FAST

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA



LEARNING SOME MEANS OF DEFENSE IS A GREAT WAY TO PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY IF YOU'RE UNEXPECTEDLY ATTACKED AT HOME OR ON THE STREETS. VARIOUS TYPES OF CLASSES ARE VIABLE OPTIONS TO LEARN OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE SKILLS.

HOWEVER, MANY TIMES you'll find yourself in classes or curriculum that can take years for you to advance, at least to the point of you feeling confident in the techniques.

If you follow some of the advice listed here, you can condense your learning without skipping vital steps or failing to gather the proper experience under your belt. These tips will help adapt your current self-defense or martial arts training and direct you on the fast path to becoming a thorn in a bad guy's side if they seek to do you harm.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

If you don't do your research first about the schools available to you, then you could waste a lot of time looking at classes, trying classes out or joining up only to quit just a week or so later. Not all martial

arts classes are suited for realistic self-defense. Some focus on the sport aspect, where trophies, ribbons and metals are their top priority, while others lean toward the philosophical side with subtle, fluid movements. Still other schools may focus on katas (forms) in which memorized movements

are repeated every class and only simulate fighting "invisible" attackers.

GET IN SHAPE AT HOME

If you join a self-defense or martial arts class and



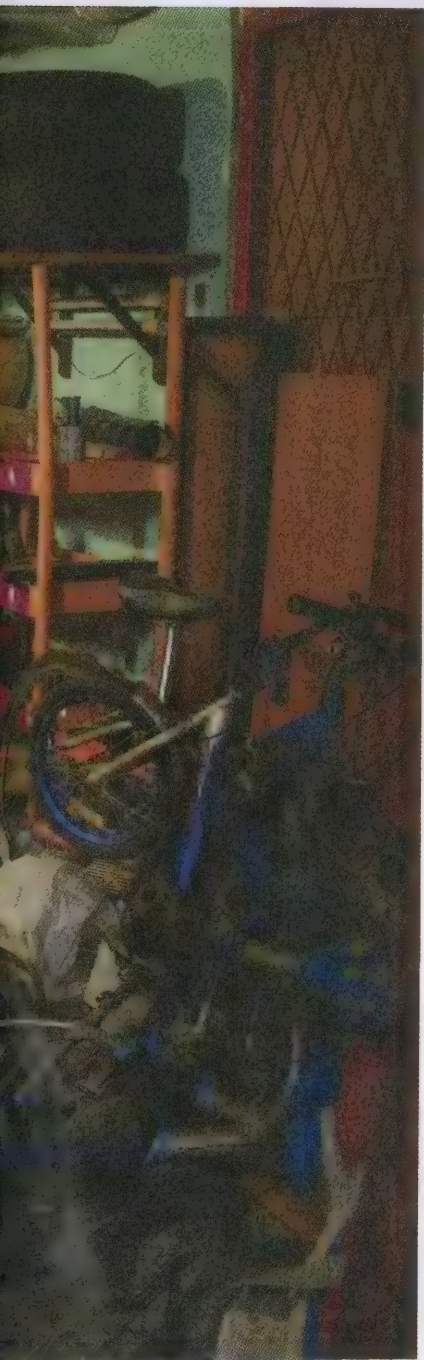
Practicing at home is essential, as repetition will build muscle memory.

the first half or more of the class is warmup, calisthenics or filler like some weight training or running around the block, then you should begin to look elsewhere. These exercises can be done at home on your own time, not where you should be learning techniques and defense. While it's

true that there should be some form of warmups so you don't pull a muscle or such, it shouldn't take up more than 10 minutes of the class. You came to learn to defend yourself, not do what can be done at your neighborhood gym.

IS YOUR CLASS HANDS-ON?

If you join any self-defense class or martial art geared toward teaching personal safety, you need to get "hands-on"—that is, work with a variety of people that offer you different heights, weights and body types. If you're only paired with someone equal to you in age, height, skill level and gender, then you are limiting yourself. You will also learn at a much slower rate than if you mixed it up with all types of people in your class. There is an old saying in the martial arts world: "If you can do the technique correctly to everyone in the room, then you got the technique." If not, then your instructor is leading you into a false sense of security. Not all bad guys out there will be the same build and strength level, and exert the same aggression, so don't train like it's one-size-fits all. If your instructors won't budge and let you pair up with different people, it's time to look for another school.



THINK YOU HAVE SELF-DISCIPLINE?

YOU DON'T IF YOU EXHIBIT SOME OF THE FOLLOWING TRAITS BELOW.

✱ **No Follow-Through** Talk is cheap. Actions speak louder than words. If you can't back up your boasts, then you're not setting goals and are probably not organized when it comes to planning.

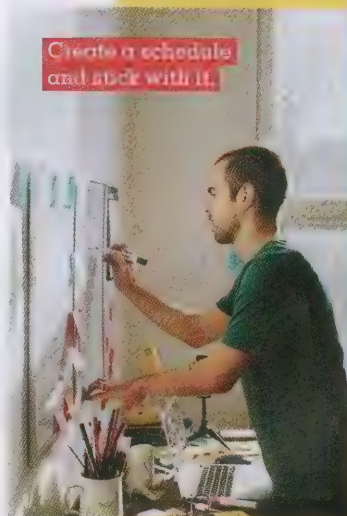
shoddy, sub-par or incomplete.

✱ **No Plan or Schedule** Flying by the seat of their pants is not the way to go through life. Yes, some spontaneity is great, but not every day and not when you have a goal to reach.

✱ **Can't Say No** Not being able to say "no" is the very backbone of not being disciplined. You have to be firm and prioritize your life and events. If there is conflict, have the strength to just say no.

✱ **Make Rash Decisions** Jumping into a decision without weighing all the information can cause myriad problems down the road. Stop, think and make the call based upon the facts—and you'll do just fine.

✱ **Often Procrastinate** "I'll do it later" is the mantra for people that never seem to get to their task at hand. They put it off and put it off until it's down to the wire and the work then is usually



ONLINE VIDEOS CAN BE A GREAT RESOURCE, BUT THEY CAN'T REPLACE HANDS-ON LEARNING WITH OTHERS.



Get your instructor, as well as the school, by reading reviews and checking their reputation.



CLASSES CAN HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR STRENGTH, STAMINA, FLEXIBILITY, AGILITY AND SO MUCH MORE.

MAKE IT A HABIT

Like New Year's resolutions, many people start out gung-ho about a new class or program, only to go less frequently as time passes, make excuses not to go, or just stop going altogether—and that's a bad thing. You can't fast-track your training by practicing less each week. You need to be disciplined. You need to

make it a priority, and you need to follow a schedule every week and stick to it. People learn by repetition, and by repeating the same techniques three, four or five, times a week, they will become second nature very quickly and allow instinct to take over if or when you're attacked. Reducing your time on the mat will make you forget certain aspects of the techniques and basically put you back

to square one whenever you decide to return to class.

PRACTICE ON YOUR OWN TIME

It's a wise move to supplement your training during your scheduled classes with practice sessions on your own time. Most people make friends in their classes, so invite one



or two friends to work on what you learned in class. You can meet up at a park, in someone's backyard or garage, or anywhere you can have privacy for a few hours. You'll be amazed how well this will work, as each person has their own strengths and their own weaknesses, so they may teach you something you missed in class and vice versa. Also, if everyone is stumped on a particular

move or technique, then it can be brought up in the next scheduled class and then practiced in the next home session. One great side benefit to this type of training is that you may form a bond with your practice buddies and thus be more inclined to stay in class, and on a regular schedule. Also, some friendly competition among friends will help push the skill levels of all involved at a quicker rate.

TOO MUCH TALK

Learning self-defense should be a physical undertaking. Listening to instructors talking about their glory days or hearing various stories when you should be practicing is not going to get you to a comfortable skill level. Also, sitting on the mat watching others for a large percentage of your class time will just waste your time. If speeches or stories are taking up too much of the class, it's best to move on. You need to find a class where techniques are practiced, you sweat, and you get pushed to your limits.

NOT FEELING IT?

You'll only waste your time (and money) if you stay in a course that you're not happy with or that you believe is not helping you. Don't feel pressured to stay or feel guilty that you're quitting that particular system or martial art. Some things are not for everyone, so you need to trust your

gut feeling. When a student sign ups for self-defense or martial arts classes, many dojos (martial arts schools) require them to sign a contract, which is legally binding. These contracts state that you will continue to pay your monthly dues whether you attend or not. This could be because of apathy, family issues, you moving away, or an injury that prevents you from taking classes. The binding agreement will lock you into payments for a year or more, depending upon the details within in the fine print. If you understand this and know the risks, then by all means sign away. But if you don't want to give money away due to your spotty attendance, then you can either pay month to month (at a higher cost, if they offer that option) or keep searching for a program that meets your financial needs.

DISCIPLINE YIELDS RESULTS

The bottom line to achieving quick results in your training is having discipline in all facets of your program. From consistent attendance to practicing on your own time, to correcting your problems and asking questions when you don't understand something, you'll go from novice to experienced in no time flat. Don't settle for, "I'll get there sometime" when you now have the proper info to expedite your personal self-defense skill set.



While there are many great martial arts out there, as a practical matter you're limited to the ones offered in your area or in places to which you're willing to travel regularly.



CAPTURED

TAKEN

HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE

BY RYAN LEE PRICE

KIDNAPPING AND ABDUCTION ARE HARROWING EXPERIENCES THAT NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO ENDURE. WHILE THE RISK REMAINS RELATIVELY LOW FOR MOST INDIVIDUALS IN THE UNITED STATES, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REMAIN VIGILANT AND PREPARED, AS THAT RISK INCREASES GEOMETRICALLY WHEN YOU LEAVE THE COUNTRY TO VISIT PLACES WHERE AMERICANS (MOSTLY AMERICAN POLITICS) ARE NOT POPULAR OR WHERE AMERICANS SEEM A LIKELY TARGET FOR RANSOM.



Your chances of survival decrease dramatically if you're moved to another location.

IMPLEMENTING PERSONAL

safety measures, staying aware of your surroundings and actively participating in activities in a safe location are proactive steps everyone can take to reduce the risk of falling victim to these crimes.

KIDNAPPING VS. ABDUCTION

Though they seem synonymous, kidnapping and abduction have their differences. Kidnapping is the unlawful restraint of an individual against their will, while abduction generally refers to the act of taking someone forcibly or without their consent. Both carry with them the possible intent of obtaining a ransom, causing harm or exerting control over the victim. Both crimes can have devastating physical and psychological consequences for the victims that can last a lifetime.

PREVENTION

Stay updated on local crime trends and areas with higher kidnapping risks. Knowledge is your first line of defense before you travel. When traveling, especially to unfamiliar or high-risk areas, research the destination thoroughly. Share your itinerary with trusted individuals, and consider hiring local guides or security personnel when necessary. Avoid trips to places where Americans are common victims of kidnapping.



**IT'S
HARROWING,
BUT TRY TO
REMAIN AS
CALM AS
POSSIBLE
SO YOUR
DECISIONS
AREN'T
IMPAIRED.**

Avoid risky behaviors and situations, such as walking alone in poorly lit areas at night or accepting rides from strangers. A common kidnapping practice is the fake Uber ride, so make sure you identify your ride before getting in the car.

Be vigilant of your surroundings and trust your instincts. If something feels off, take immediate action to remove yourself from the situation and location. Return to your home, hotel or a safe, well-populated place so you can formulate a plan to escape the area.

Many kidnappings and abductions occur in victims'

own neighborhood and sometimes right out of their homes. Combat this by implementing security measures in your daily life, such as varying your routines, locking doors and windows (and keeping the shades drawn at night), and using affordable and obtainable technology like security cameras, motion detectors or smartphone apps to share your location with trusted contacts. Keep your kids safe by not displaying "honor student" bumper stickers on your car or stick figure decals with your kids' names; this just gives information to

kidnappers to catch your children off guard.

Since some targeted kidnapping plots begin with the perpetrator online, be mindful of the information you share on the internet. Kidnappers may exploit personal information available on social media to target victims.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In addition to personal safety measures, community involvement plays a crucial role in preventing and

In a situation like this, reacting immediately and aggressively can break their hold so you can hopefully get away.



addressing kidnappings and abductions. Join or start a neighborhood watch program on your street or in your neighborhood. These programs can deter criminal activity and foster a sense of community security. Barring that, be observant in your neighborhood; make a mental note of cars you don't recognize and people walking down your street you've never seen before.

If you observe something unusual or suspicious in your area, report it to local law enforcement immediately. Your vigilance could help prevent a crime or lead to the apprehension of potential kidnappers.

YOU'VE BEEN TAKEN —WHAT NEXT?

In the unfortunate event that you are kidnapped or abducted, it is crucial to remain as calm and composed as possible. Your actions can significantly impact your chances of survival and recovery.

In many cases, kidnappers are after money or valuables. Comply with their demands without resisting to minimize the risk of harm to yourself. Pay attention to details about your surroundings, the kidnappers and any potential escape routes. This information can be crucial for law enforcement later. If possible, establish a rapport with your captors without showing fear by maintaining a conversation. This can help humanize you in their eyes, potentially reducing the risk of violence. If they haven't confiscated your



phone (which is a long shot), discreetly send distress signals or messages to friends, family, or authorities. Smartphones with location-sharing features can be invaluable in these situations, but do so with caution.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

If you see an opportunity to escape safely, take it. Don't

look back and keep moving until you are confident you are out of harm's way. However, be cautious and make sure the risk is worth the reward.

Learning basic self-defense techniques can provide you with the skills and confidence to protect yourself in dangerous situations. Many local organizations and self-defense schools offer



You may feel that the risk of being kidnapped or abducted is low, but that doesn't mean it can't happen to you or someone you love.

courses tailored to various age groups and skill levels.

Look for patterns in your captors' behavior to aid in your escape. What times they bring you food, what times they come and go, and anything else they repeat. Observing scheduled activities can give you a potential edge in an escape attempt: a repeated activity at a known time means you can plan what will happen in the future and use that information to your advantage.

Furthermore, monitoring time and your captives' behavior is a subtle but powerful psychological tool you can use to keep yourself alert and aware, and hopefully to stave off depression and despair: by taking an active role, you can feel more in charge of the situation.

LEARN HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF WITH AND WITHOUT A WEAPON, AND PRACTICE REGULARLY.

However, if you sense that your kidnappers aren't interested in ransom money but have abducted you for their physical gratification, you may consider putting up a substantial fight to make it difficult for them to achieve their goal. Fighting back might be all you have in your arsenal and it just might be enough to get away.

Kidnapping and abduction are distressing crimes that can have severe consequences for victims and their families, both in the short and long term. While the risk of experiencing such an event is relatively low for most Americans, understanding preventive measures and how to respond if it happens is important to your survival.

Additionally, the connection between kidnapping, terrorism/ hostage situations and the issue of ransoms highlights the complex challenges faced by governments and individuals when dealing with these crimes around the world. Staying informed, being alert to your surroundings, practicing personal safety and being prepared for any situation can make a significant difference in minimizing the risk and increasing the chances of a safe resolution if confronted with such a harrowing experience.

About the Author *Ryan Lee Price is a freelance writer living in Corona, California, with his wife and kids. When not exploring the flora and fauna of the backwoods, he is busy climbing Southern California's tallest peaks.*

Remember that the goal is to get home safely, no matter what it takes.



AFTERMATH OF AN ABDUCTION

Survivors of kidnapping or abduction are usually traumatized for long periods of time afterward, so support and recovery are paramount to the healing process. Victims and their families should seek professional assistance to cope with the emotional and psychological trauma:

■ **Therapy and Counseling**

Professional therapy and counseling services can help victims and their families process the trauma and rebuild their lives. Trauma-informed care is crucial for long-term recovery.

■ **Support Groups**

Joining support groups for survivors of abduction or kidnapping can provide a sense of community and understanding during the healing process.

■ **Legal Assistance**

Seek guidance from a lawyer to navigate any legal issues related to the abduction, such as getting restraining orders against the abductor(s) or pursuing legal action against the perpetrator(s).

■ **Advocacy Organizations**

Many advocacy organizations, such as the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, offer support and resources for victims of abduction and their families.

One of mankind's first
weapons is still in use today.





SELF-DEFENSE

WALKING AIDS TO THE RESCUE

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a walking stick. The stick has a wooden shaft and a blue and orange foam grip. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a white wall and green grass.

USING CANES AND STICKS
AGAINST AN ATTACKER

BY WAYSUN JOHNNY TSAI

WE ARE OFTEN REMINDED THAT DURING A VIOLENT ENCOUNTER, WE WILL MOST LIKELY BECOME OUR OWN BODYGUARD. WHILE WE ARE ON OUR OWN PATH INTO AGING AND INJURIES, THE IDEA OF DEFENSE WITHOUT A FIREARM ALMOST SEEMS LIKE AN UNREALISTIC THOUGHT OF AN ACTION SCENE FROM A JOHN WICK MOVIE.



THE TRUTH IS MOST OF US

will never have a John Wick set of fighting skills. Sure, there are some of you reading this right now who are special ops combat veterans, SWAT law enforcement officers, or local championship MMA ring fighters. There is the chance that you are the most impressive elite warrior in your family. But what about the rest of your family and loved ones? Are they as capable as you are? What about when you are not there to protect them? What happens if you get injured and all you have left is a limp and a walking stick?

For a period in my life, I thought I was as tough as they come. Then I broke my neck (five fused discs), back (awaiting fusion), tore my knee (awaiting surgery), tore my rotator cuff (awaiting surgery), and got a hernia next to my groin (again, awaiting surgery). Since the spring of 2023, I have been limping around in a knee brace to and from physical therapy with a walking cane. What do bad guys see when they see me? Easy pickings, that's what. No more Mr. Tough Guy, just a middle-aged, injured guy slowly limping everywhere.

As of right now I am walking with a cane. Not so much a standard broken old man walking cane, but my trusty old metal Hawkin' Stick from TOPS Knives. I have had this metal walking stick with a leather-sheathed tomahawk handle for the better part of 15 years. While the Hawkin' Stick is a long-retired product of TOPS, you may be able to find one on eBay

if you search hard enough. After three surgeries, it has become my walking stick of choice, so it is worth the hunt if you can find one. If not, any metal walking stick will do for what we are talking about here.

There are complete martial art systems that specialize in fighting with a walking stick, but there are no magic ninja skills in this article on utilizing a metal walking stick for self-defense. There are simple tactics, angles and a definitive mindset. Basically, if you are going to use anything as a weapon to defend yourself, you must mentally be prepared to commit to utilizing it to its fullest potential. That means don't pull any punches or swings with your cane, or it may just end up being used against you.

Attack the attack. Every block is a strike, and every strike is a block. Every swing that you take is meant to stop whatever is coming at you on contact. If you are blocking another club, knife or stick, swing like you are planning to going through it.

Remember, your attacker asked to be hit the moment they committed to hurting you. In this article, we are going to demonstrate some basic, time-proven techniques that may just save your tail one day while walking down the trail.

SELF DEFENSE 1

Defending against a bat overhead attack

1 The author (right) is approached while out walking. He attempts to verbally de-escalate and

raises a hand gesture for his would-be attacker to stay back.

2 The attacker swings overhead with his bat. The author lunges in using a double-handed high block (see page 83), deflecting the bat, driving it upward and angled away.

3 The author continues the circular motion of his block, moving the bat toward the outside of his body and chambers for a counterstrike.

4 The author chambers his walking stick for another counterstrike.

5 The author thrusts the handle of his cane into the throat of his attacker, driving his head and body back.

SELF DEFENSE 2

Defending against a club angle attack

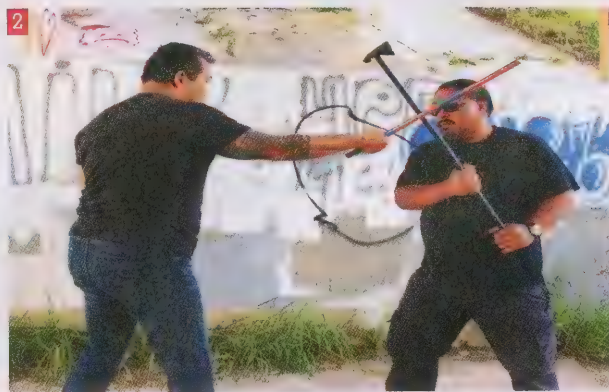
1 Sam (left) approaches Frank with a club; Frank gestures to Sam to stay back while taking a guarded position.

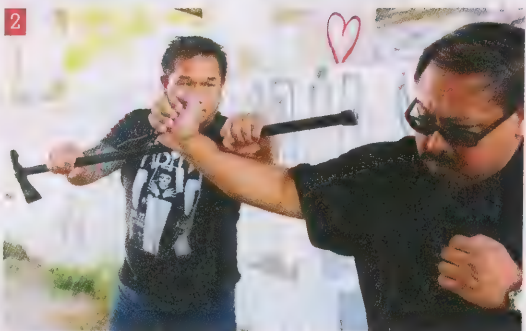
2 Sam steps in, attacking Frank with an Angle 1 right-shouldered swing (see page 83). Frank steps to the side and counters with an Angle 1 right-shouldered swing of his own, but using it as a block and to parry.

3 Frank continues his circular parry to drop Sam's club down to the outside, creating an opening for a counterstrike.

4 Frank continues his circular parry into an Angle 2 attack to Sam's head.

THE GOAL IN ANY DEFENSE SITUATION IS TO BE ABLE TO GET AWAY FROM YOUR ATTACKER AND LEAVE QUICKLY.





SELF DEFENSE 3

Defending against an overhead knife attack

1 Sam (right) blocks Frank's ice pick overhead stab with a double-handed high block (see next page). Sam thrusts his walking stick upward and inward as hard as he can, stopping the attack.

2 Using his walking stick, Sam redirects Frank's energy to the inside, passing him to the outside of Frank's arm.

3 Sam drives his metal walking stick into Frank's face, thrusting it with both hands, driving him back. Notice that Sam is only using metal to block the attacks; he's not using his arms or hands attempting

to catch the blade.

4 Sam cocks back his walking stick for a follow-up strike.

5 Sam delivers a second double-handed trust with his metal cane, this time to Frank's rib cage, which may put him down.

BASIC STRIKES AND BLOCKS

1 Guard Sam (left) and Frank demonstrate a basic guarded stance with a stick behind one shoulder and hand outstretched.

2 Swing Here they are showing an identical Angle 1 (from the right shoulder down) overhead attack/block.

MOVEMENT IS LIFE

A basic walking stick measures somewhere between 3 and 6 feet long. The idea is to create, maintain and utilize distance to get away from whatever or whoever is attacking you. If you only give them a stick to strike, it won't hurt you. Self-defense does not mean that you must hurt, injure or beat up the other

person. It simply means that you are keeping the other guy from hurting, injuring or beating you up. Move and keep yourself at an arm's full reach with your stick. That means your attacker will have to get past your stick to get to you. If you have a 4-foot stick and a 3-foot arm span, that is an average of 7 feet

between you and them if you keep moving. Movement is life. Once you stop moving, it's easier for them to get past your stick. Don't voluntarily give up your personal space; keep moving and swinging like a maniac that's trying to keep a 10-foot open circle of space to himself and make the bad guy earn it.

3 Follow Through

They allow their Angle 1 strike to carry through to the opposite side chamber.

4 Round Two This is the beginning of an Angle 2, with sticks chambered on their left shoulders.

5 Swing Here is the Angle 2 (from left shoulder down) overhead attack/block. They repeat Steps 1 through 5 as a drill, forming a basic figure eight motion.

6 Block This is a simple double-handed high block.

They lunge in, then thrust in and up. This move can be used as a block to an overhead attack or a very effective upward thrust to the chin and face of an attacker.

Practice these techniques until they become second-nature and instinctive.



About the Author A Chicago native, SiJo Waysun Johnny Tsai is an internationally recognized combatives and survival instructor. He is a published book author, tactical/outdoor magazine writer and a DVD personality with over 37 years of experience instructing practical street defense and combatives to the military, law enforcement agencies and civilians alike.



WEAPONS

PEPPER

Even a weak rush can be
enough to convince an
attacker to leave you alone.

SPRAY

GETTING SPICY WITH SELF-DEFENSE

BY JIM COBB

ALL OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, A FIREARM IS SEEN AS THE BEST DEFENSE WEAPON. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SITUATIONS WHERE DEADLY FORCE MAY NOT BE ADVISABLE. BEAR IN MIND THAT ONCE YOU PULL THAT TRIGGER, YOU CAN'T RECALL THE BULLET.



As with any defense option, it is advisable to practice with it. In this case, do so outdoors so there's plenty of ventilation. Get a good feel for the effective range, in particular.

HAVING SOME SORT OF less-than-lethal option available is recommended. For some time now, pepper spray has been high on the list of suggested options. There are several reasons for that, including:

- ✱ It isn't negated by a person's mental state or the influence of alcohol or other substances.
- ✱ It is legal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, although some states have restrictions in place.
- ✱ It has no permanent effects.
- ✱ Most products can be used more than once.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Pepper spray's active ingredient is oleoresin capsicum (OC). This, in turn,

is made up from different capsaicinoids, which are what give peppers their spiciness or heat. Of the various capsaicinoids, capsaicin is the strongest.

When sprayed into the face of an attacker, the OC causes several immediate reactions:

- ✱ Their skin will begin to burn with varying degrees of intensity.
- ✱ Their eyes will tear uncontrollably, causing vision difficulties.
- ✱ Their mucous membranes will become inflamed, which results in breathing difficulty.

On top of that, there's a psychological impact. As these physical symptoms manifest, and they do so nearly instantaneously, the person may likely begin to panic. Think about how

you'd react if you suddenly have trouble breathing, you can't see and your face feels like it's on fire.

DELIVERY SYSTEMS

There are a few different types of pepper spray products, based on how they emit the OC. Those that fire a stream of liquid or gel are usually seen as the best option for most people. The stream isn't affected much by wind currents, so there's not much risk of it blowing back at you. Plus, it is easy to adjust your aim on the fly, as you can see the stream easily. Imagine using a narrow hose to soak someone and you'll have the right idea.

The stream models have a range of up to about 15 to 20 feet, depending on the individual product. This allows you to keep some distance between you and your attacker, hopefully incapacitating them before they are able to get within arm's reach of you.

One word of caution, though. Using any OC product indoors will potentially expose you to some contact with it. While this is a risk no matter where you are, if you're inside, the odor and such are going to be concentrated, rather than drifting away. This is definitely a situation where you want to impact your aggressor as quickly as you can, then flee the area with quickly so you can call the police.

Another type of pepper defense product uses a foam rather than a stream. The range is shorter, around 4 to



Oleoresin capsicum is derived from various peppers and concentrated for use in sprays.

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a dark tactical vest with a mesh pocket. A hand is holding a black DC Spray device, which is a non-lethal weapon. The device has a black handle and a silver-colored nozzle. The background is blurred, showing more of the vest and some indistinct shapes.

DC SPRAY IS AN EXCELLENT
LESS-THAN-LETHAL OPTION.

However you decide to
carry it, make sure you
can reach it in a hurry,
and practice doing so
on a regular basis.



Understand the disbursement method used by the pepper spray you purchase.



8 feet. However, the foam is sticky and difficult to wipe away, so it will work against the person longer. Some of these products even incorporate a dye that can't be easily washed off, so your attacker will be marked for easy identification.

One more option to consider is the so-called pepper projectile. The most common is probably the PepperBall, but there are a few other brands out there as well. Rather than a liquid or foam, the device will fire small plastic spheres that are filled with a powder called PAVA, which stands for pelargonic acid vanillylamide. This is a naturally occurring capsaicinoid found in chile peppers, but it is also often produced synthetically. When the sphere impacts the target, it bursts open, releasing the PAVA powder.

A friend and I tested a pepper projectile product a couple of years ago. I can tell you from experience that even a passing whiff of PAVA powder will get your attention, causing some coughing at the very least. A full dose would definitely put someone down for the count. However, the downside is that most of the projectile weapons that are small enough to easily conceal and carry have very limited ammunition capacities. They can also be somewhat awkward to deploy and fire, although repeated practice will assist in that regard. Some of these companies offer other types of sphere projectiles, too, such as rubber balls or even paintballs, which can be used to mark your attacker.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

When you look at the ratings for a pepper spray product, you'll often see three different measurements or numbers:

- ✱ Oleoresin capsicum percentage (OC%)
- ✱ Scoville heat units (SHU)
- ✱ Major capsaicinoids percentage (MC%)

The one that really matters is the MC percentage. That figure is what will tell you how powerful the pepper spray truly is. It is somewhat analogous to the proof rating on the alcohol you buy. The higher the MC, the more potent the pepper spray. It doesn't take much to be effective. The MC figures you see might look very small, often around 1% or so, but that's still a very potent spray.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

There are a few factors to keep in mind that go beyond the delivery method and the strength of the chemical. Check the laws where you live to see if there are restrictions that may impact your purchase, such as the size of the canister that you're allowed to carry. Also consider how you plan to carry it. For example, if you want something you can keep with you during a morning jog, a belt holster might be better than a key ring.

Also, pay attention to where your finger

WASP SPRAY IS NOT RECOMMENDED

For several years, many people have suggested purchasing wasp spray in place of pepper spray. Their reasoning is that it is often cheaper, plus it has just as much range. However, I cannot stress enough just how bad this idea is.

First of all, it doesn't work well against people. Wasp spray is formulated to have an immediate and negative impact against wasps and other insects. While an argument could

be made that any substance sprayed into a person's eyes will have some sort of an effect, pepper spray does far more than wasp spray. Anyone who has used wasp spray and had it blow back at them will tell you that it stings a little, at best—far different than what pepper spray will do to a person.

Stick with what's been proven to work and leave the Hail Mary passes for when you have no other options.

or thumb will press the activation button or trigger. You want something that is intuitive, that you can find by feel without having to look down at the canister.

At the end of the day, remember that while pepper spray is considered a less-than-lethal defense option, it is still a weapon and should be treated with care and respect. It isn't a toy and it should not be brandished unless you fully intend to use it.

CHECK FOR LOCAL LAWS TO BE CERTAIN OF ANY RULES REGARDING THE CARRY OR USE OF PEPPER SPRAY.

[SECTION / 04]

EVERYTHING YOU NEED, AND THEN SOME

GEAR & GADGETS







BEST BUYS

NEW PREPPER PRODUCTS

BY PSG STAFF

WE REACHED OUT TO PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE SURVIVAL FIELD FOR THEIR INPUT ON THE LATEST ITEMS TO HIT THE MARKET. WE ALSO SCoured THE INTERNET TO FIND WHAT HAS CAUGHT PEOPLE'S ATTENTION.

1 REDEMPTION

The knife is based on legendary knife maker Ken Onion's Deadman's Hand custom, which in turn was a tribute to the knives carried by outlaws and poker players of the Wild West. It was named after the aces-and-eights hand Wild Bill Hickok was said to have held at the time of his death. This folder is Onion's first CRKT knife to have a Crossbar Lock. It has a MagnaCut steel blade for great strength and edge retention.

\$225
crkt.com

2 DEADLY INGENUITY

Traversing the centuries and continents, this book focuses exclusively on fighting tools that aren't commonly known. It brings to light some historical weapons and tactics that have never before been surveyed. Sources range from Asian martial arts texts and Irish mythology to Victorian crime blotters, naval history, and even the memoirs of English knights. This is a great reference work that's well researched and fun to read.

\$25
amazon.com

3 SPEEDLOCKER

You can keep your valuables secure at home or on the go with this handy portable safe. With rugged construction and a padded interior, it will keep the contents secure, even if you're traveling. It requires no batteries or other power source. You can choose one of 31 user-programmable mechanical lock combinations. It measures 12.4 inches by 8.2 inches, with a thickness of 2.78 inches. Keep this with your evacuation gear.

\$165
streamlight.com

Handsome,
functional and
incredibly cool.



2

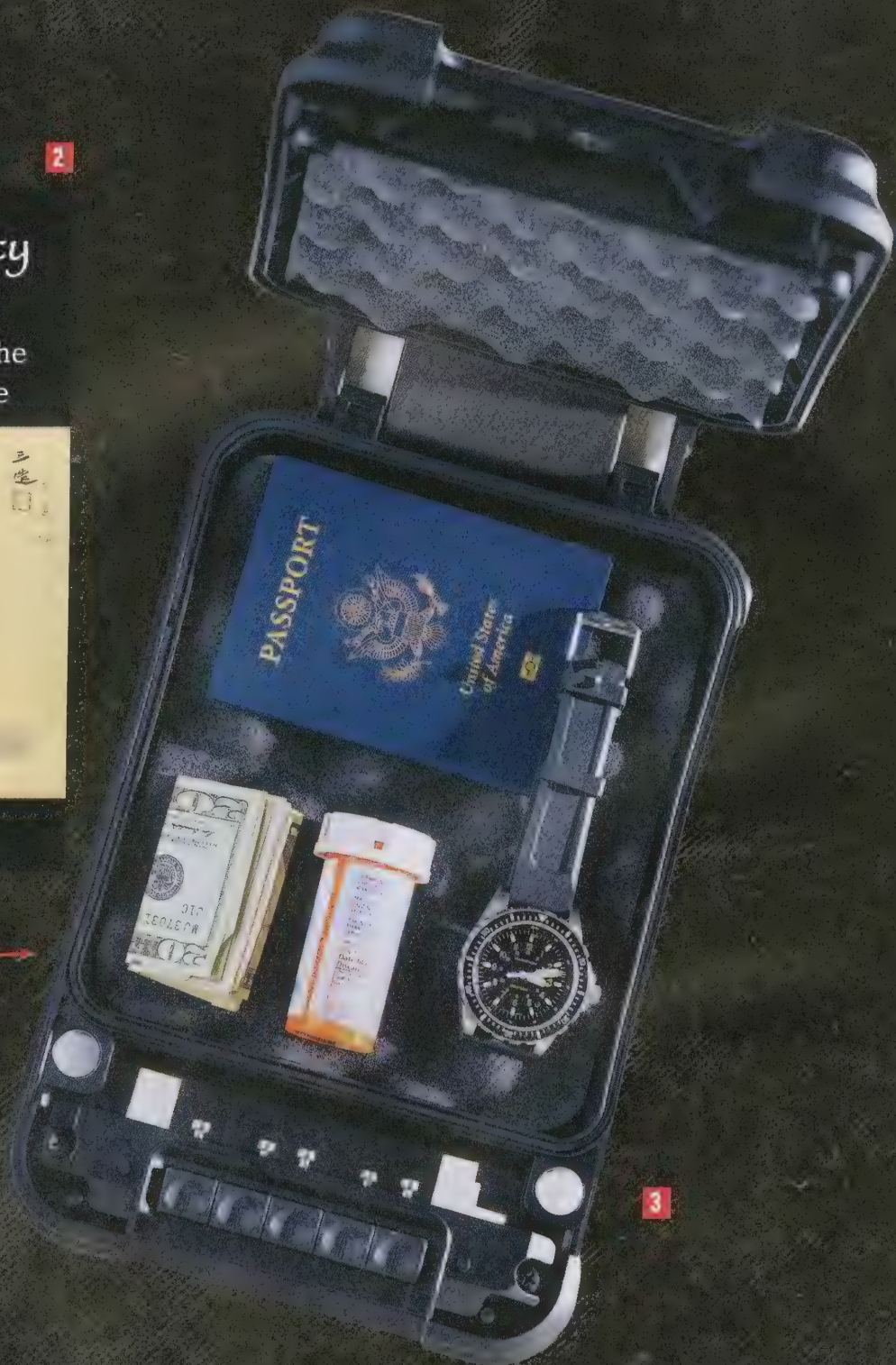
Deadly Ingenuity

A History of Unusual
Weapons from Around the
World and Across Time



Robert Escobar

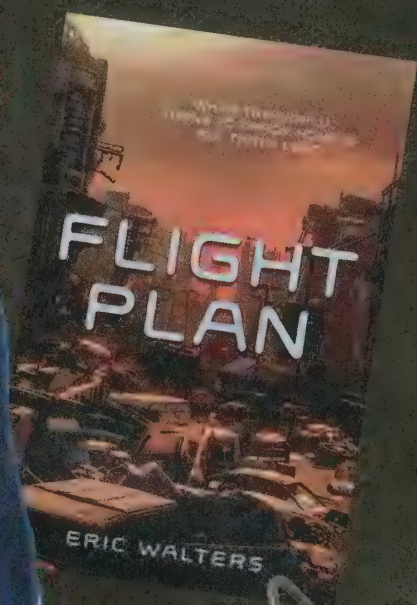
Keep jewelry and
cash safe when
you bug out.



4



5



Take notes
regardless of weather
or temperature

6



7



8



10



9



11



12



4 LV COVERT CARRY PACK

Featuring 5.11's signature CenterLine design, this pack will keep you undercover while providing a 45L carry capacity. It has quick-release shoulder straps, a removable sternum strap and a side carry handle. Lower webbing straps allow for extra cargo. Dual front pockets offer admin organization and MOLLE webbing for organization. It is available in three colors.

\$170

511tactical.com

5 FLIGHT PLAN

Thirteen-year-old Jamie's plane is just taking off when something goes terribly wrong. The lights go out, communications halts and the engine stops. After a bumpy landing, Jamie realizes it's not just his flight. All the other planes have been grounded too. Cars and cellphones aren't working, either. Technology has shut down, and no one knows why. Soon, it becomes clear that this disaster is anything but local.

\$17

amazon.com

6 GRAVITY FED LEAD HOLDER

This is like a pencil on steroids. A triangular barrel and textured grip make it easy to hold and use, even when wearing gloves. It features an extra thick 5.6mm lead, and it works great on paper as well as lumber and other rough surfaces. To advance the lead, simply hold it horizontally and activate the clutch at the top of the pencil. Comes with three extra packs of lead.

\$10

dltrtrading.com

7 LAUNCH 11

One of the latest in the Launch series from Kershaw, the 11 is sleek, slim and ready for duty. The CPM 154 steel blade will keep a great edge and the anodized aluminum handle keeps the weight down. A bronze-anodized titanium pivot trim ring and interesting handle cutout give the knife a distinctive appearance. This is an automatic knife, so check local laws.

\$175

dltrtrading.com

8 AROS K9 HARNESS

If you have a canine partner, this harness is exactly what you need for consistent control. Built for hard use, it features 1.75-inch nylon webbing and a AustriAlpin COBRA buckle. It is adjustable for girth around the chest and neck/front legs. There is a metal attachment hook and a horizontal handle for control points as well as a loop panel for identification patches, if desired.

\$150

511tactical.com

9 WHOLE ENCHILADA

This is a compact, ultralight, knife sharpener that's easy to use. It has a 600-grit diamond stone and a leather strop, giving you a complete sharpening system that fits in the palm of your hand. The diamond stone will create a burr and the stop removes it, leaving a hair-popping sharp edge. When closed, the whole package is just 3.6 inches by 1.6 inches, and less than an inch thick.

\$45

dltrtrading.com

10 MODULAR DOG LEASH

This leash has a maximum length of 7 feet. It can be handheld or worn around the waist for hands-free walking. A bungee system with tubular webbing provides comfort for you and the dog. It has a padded neoprene handle that's adjustable, along with a V ring for attachments. A secondary web handle is located near the bungee.

\$35

511tactical.com

11 MAX GRIP TRAINER

This option for training enthusiasts is built for breathability and durability while providing a stable platform for any workout. It has a protective TPU exoskeleton, a mesh upper to prevent overheating and a MaxGrip outsole for great traction. The TPU heel reinforcement will hold up to any training session, no matter how intense.

\$100

511tactical.com

12 CAMPCRAFT FOOD PROVISIONS

Campcraft Food Provisions are made with top-quality USA-sourced ingredients and have a 25-year shelf life, making them the perfect choice for camping and emergency preparedness. The brand's food is high in protein and calories and comes in realistic serving sizes. These meals are also non-GMO and soy-free.

\$13

campcraftoutdoors.com



BUYER'S GUIDE

ZEROING IN ON SURVIVAL

WHAT SETS A SURVIVAL KNIFE APART?

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA

WHILE ALMOST EVERYONE AGREES THAT A KNIFE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL TO HAVE IN YOUR POSSESSION DURING A SURVIVAL OR EMERGENCY SCENARIO, JUST EXACTLY WHAT CONSTITUTES A "SURVIVAL" KNIFE IS ALWAYS UP TO SOME DEBATE.



A sharp blade is one of
the most valuable
tools you can possess.

Avoid gimmicks like
saw-toothed spines
and hollow handles.

CHOOSE A KNIFE THAT FITS YOUR HAND AND GRIP AS WELL AS IT FITS INTO YOUR BUDGET.

IT'S TRUE THAT YOU CAN go to a store or browse online and find knives that are called survival knives—but more often than not, these blades are more flash over substance with cheaply made materials, gaudy accessories and blades that probably wouldn't cut through a piece of cardboard. These props would be more of a detriment than a true lifesaving tool.

Now, on the flipside, there are many durable knives on the market that exhibit

high quality and superb craftsmanship, but they would be poor choices to make the transition from everyday knife to becoming your go-to blade when a survival situation comes your way.

Here, we'll make it easy for you. From size to steel type, to sharpening ability, handle material and optional accessories, all will be dissected to allow you the best choice in a tool that will become your long-term sidekick when things go south fast.



The Peacekeeper
knife, from 5.11
Tactical

SIMPLICITY IS KING

Right out of the gate, let's get one thing out of the way. The debate over whether to go fixed-blade or folder is really no debate at all. A fixed-blade knife is more reliable and durable under harsh conditions. The connection point between the blade and handle of a folder is susceptible to breakage or malfunctioning, which you don't need while out in the field. Continued use of your knife chopping, prying, thrusting and cutting will put a lot of pressure on the knife, and the connecting joint specifically. Less is more, and the fewer points of failure on your chosen knife, the better. While on the subject of durability of a fixed-blade knife, you want to definitely go with full-tang construction—that

is, the blade metal runs fully down and through the handle, straight to forming the pommel. Again, fewer connection points (where the blade would attach to the handle, for instance) means less chance of breakage. Remember the words full tang, and don't be misled by terms such as partial tang or push tang. These words indicate that the blade material stops partly within the handle and is prone to become loose or unattached under heavy use. Another pro of choosing a full-tang knife is, if the handle ever partially breaks or fully comes off for whatever reason, the bare metal can be wrapped with cordage or heavy fabric and you're back in business.

METAL MATTERS

With the blade being the most useful part of the

knife, you'll need to make intelligent decisions on the edge variety, the steel type and the grind. First, a single edge is the way to go. Though having two sharpened edges may seem like an advantage, you'll lose versatility of your knife if it's doubled-edged. You won't be able to use it as a striker against a ferrocerium rod, nor would you be able to add leverage with your thumb (naturally, it would cut you) for tasks like carving or shaving wood.

Steel type comes down to personal preference, and with it comes compromise. There is a fine balance between the toughness of the metal and the ability to sharpen the edge and edge retention. Carbon steel is durable, yet it rusts if left wet or with acidic materials left on the blade. It will need to be sharpened regularly, but luckily it is easy to sharpen. Stainless



Whether it is made of leather, Kydex or nylon, a sturdy sheath is a necessity with any fixed-blade knife. It should hold the knife securely no matter what you're doing.



An example of a full-tang, spear-point knife.

steel is highly corrosion-resistant, which is a plus, yet it's more difficult to sharpen and can't handle hard-core strikes. Finally, there's tool steel. This amalgamation of both high carbon and stainless offers the best of both worlds. It's durable and

corrosion-resistant, although not as much as both carbon and stainless, respectively. It's a great option for when you want a knife with a well-balanced steel composition. Only you can choose what's best for you and your intended uses.

TIP CHOICE

Like knives themselves, the quantity of diverse blade tips can be overwhelming to the shopper. Many types of tips have their specific benefit, but when it comes to a survival knife and when thinking versatility out in the field, the sharpened spear tip comes out on top. This adds the ability to stab or pierce, which comes in very handy for defense, against other humans out to do you harm or for four-legged beasts that may have you on the menu while you're out in the wilderness. This type of tip also is advantageous if you have to convert your knife into a spear for catching small game or fishing in a stream or brook.

A spear point allows you to perform smaller, more precise tasks like processing small food components, minor repairs around camp, notching and small carving projects, or removing irritating splinters in your hand. A close second for those who want another option would be a knife featuring a drop-point tip. This style still allows for piercing and stabbing, and

NEED SOME HELP WITH SHOPPING?

THESE REPUTABLE COMPANIES OFFER SURVIVAL-STYLE KNIVES AND MORE THAT CAN SAVE YOUR HIDE WHEN THINGS GO FROM BAD TO MUCH, MUCH WORSE.

✱ **Gerber Gear** Here, you'll find a wide variety of durable outdoor and survival knives, along with hard-core tools like axes, hatchets and saws. gerbergear.com

✱ **CRKT** Columbia River Knife and Tool

stocks knives of all varieties along with a great selection of traditional tomahawks, hatchets and urban EDC tools and gear. crkt.com

✱ **5.11 Tactical** This company offers rugged outdoor clothing, packs, bags

and gear, and a selection of knives that are top rated and high quality for survival and emergency purposes. 511tactical.com

✱ **KA-Bar** With dozens upon dozens of knives to choose from, Ka-Bar has a blade for

nearly anyone, for any urban or rural task needed. kabar.com

✱ **SOG** From tactical to outdoor, SOG offers knives, packs, multitools, and numerous other products that stand up to heavy use. sognives.com

in fact it may even be better for more detailed tasks due to its more pronounced tip.

THE IDEAL SIZE

Now, like Goldilocks, you'll need to find the size and length that is just right for you. There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to overall dimensions of your chosen knife. There is a fine balance you need to find between being too big for some detail work and being too small for more hard-core tasks like batoning and cleaver-like chopping. People have different hand sizes and the knife must be comfortable within their specific grasp. This is where shopping in a brick-and-mortar store is advantageous. You will be able to handle the knives and really get a feel for the length, weight and overall size. Generally speaking, the preferred length for a survival-style knife runs from 8 inches to 12 inches to accomplish the widest range of diverse tasks. It will all come down to personal preference. Try many in hand to make an informed decision for yourself.

HANDLING THE JOB

Although the blade of your survival knife gets the most attention—and rightly so—the handle shouldn't be overlooked. It's ideal if the handle can be removed easily (so, again full tang is an absolute must) so the blade can readily attach to a staff to create a spear.

This can be used for both fishing and self-defense purposes. Some smaller style survival knives have holes throughout the handle created specifically for attaching the knife to a staff using cordage. This is a great option so there is no chance of you losing handle parts if you decide to disassemble while out in the field. The knife's handle should be able to sit flush against the rounded stick. If, during your shopping experiences, you find this not to be, then pass on it and find another. Handle materials that work well for survival knives include Micarta, G10 and rubber, which is available in both synthetic and natural. All handles mentioned vary in grip-ability in wet conditions and overall

durability over time, but you can't go wrong with any of these options.

LONG-LASTING

A survival knife is not only a tool if or when a worst-case scenario comes your way, but rather a long-term companion. It should last for years, even decades under rugged, hard-core use. It is crucial that you take your time when selecting a survival knife. Do your research and get a feel with it in hand. A tool or weapon is essentially an extension of the person wielding it, and you'll know the best selection to slide into your sheath. As for the best sheath for your survival knife, well, that's a story for another day.

❌
LEARN
HOW TO
SHARPEN AND
MAINTAIN
YOUR KNIFE'S
EDGE, AS A
DULL KNIFE
CAN BE
DANGEROUS
TO THE USER.





This small pouch from
Tuff Possum Gear is
perfect for the essentials.



GEAR GUIDE

DAY TRIP COMPANIONS

THE TRADITIONAL BACKPACK'S YOUNGER BROTHER

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA

SOMETIMES YOUR ADVENTURES AWAY FROM HOME DON'T LAST FOR MONTHS, WEEKS—OR EVEN A FEW DAYS. IN FACT, YOUR TIME OUT IN A RURAL OR URBAN ENVIRONMENT MAY BE SHORT-LIVED. BECAUSE OF THIS, YOU WON'T NEED TO LUG AROUND AN OVERSTUFFED BAG, STRAINING YOUR BACK. ALL YOU REALLY NEED IS A RELIABLE AND DURABLE DAYPACK.

DAYPACKS FILL THE NICHE between cargo pants pockets and a full backpack. They take the form of a waist pack, sling bag or mini shoulder bag, and are ideal for carrying your essentials, while being fatigue-free due to their carry size and weight. They can also begin their journey with you nearly empty—and anything of value you find along your way can be dropped inside.

So, grab your bag, stock it with your essentials and hit the trail. You'll soon notice that even though you're trekking solo, you have a valuable companion by your side.



RUSH MOAB 10 SLING PACK

Sling bags have come a long way, and the MOAB goes a few steps beyond that. It's all about the details, and this ambidextrous day carry bag features all the bells and whistles you could ever want, including a covert rear pocket for a sidearm, a canteen pocket on the shoulder, a hydration bladder compartment, a fleece-lined sunglass slot, and an interior main section for housing a tablet or electronics and gear. Additionally, comfortable padded straps, a load balance system and a top hold handle all make this sling bag a pleasure, not a chore, to carry on all your short excursions.

Specifications

- Adjustable cushioned shoulder strap
- Covert Tactac pocket in rear
- Fleece-lined sunglasses pocket
- Multiple interior pockets
- Hydration pocket with pass-through port

• **MSRP** \$105
• **URL** 511tactical.com

CONCEALED CARRY WAIST PACK

Fanny pouches may be used by tourists at a theme park, but this tactical-style waist-carry pouch is perfect for a few hours or a one-day excursion for avid adventurers throughout the wilderness or trekking across the urban jungle. It offers one large main pouch to hold your wallet, a bottle of water or some energy bars. There are three outer pouches for small items like keys, a small knife or fire-starting gear, and a concealed-carry hidden pocket in back for any situations that require fast access to a firearm. Tough, yet lightweight denier polyester offers a comfortable fit for hours of backwoods or urban environment travel.

Specifications

- Large center pouch with quick-release buckle flap
- Hidden back zippered concealed-carry compartment
- Three multifunctional outer pockets for easy access
- Constructed of highly durable denier polyester
- Available in Black, Coyote Brown or Olive Drab colors

• **MSRP** \$33
• **URL** rothco.com



RUSH MOAB 6 SLING PACK

You wouldn't think that so many features could be packed into this compact sling bag, but 5.11 did it with style! This ambidextrous bag features a fleece-lined sunglass pouch, a rear concealed-carry section, a hydration bladder compartment, a large main pouch for small electronics, a fully organizable storage area and a secondary double-zip pocket, all in a frame using 5.11's signature Centerline design that won't bog you down or throw you off-balance. It doesn't stop there, however, as the MOAB can be fully integrated with other 5.11 backpacks utilizing its ingenious 5.11 Tier System. Hit the trail: You'll be well covered!

Specifications

- Fully customizable sling pack
- Water-resistant outer layer
- Integrated hydration pocket
- MOLLE compatible exterior
- Available in Black, Ranger Green, Double-Tap or Kangaroo colors

• **MSRP** \$80
• **URL** 511tactical.com

SKYWEIGHT SURVIVAL CHEST PACK

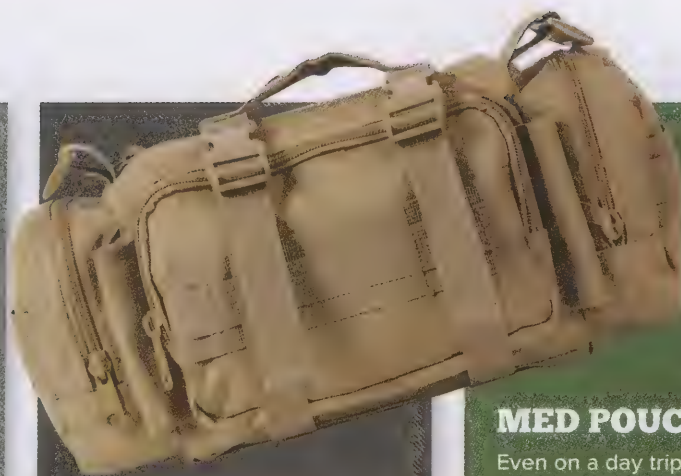
Keep all your essentials at hand when the you-know-what hits the fan. This extremely lightweight survival pack features a quick-release harness system, hot pulls for quick access to the CCW compartment and an internal loop panel for securing gear. When removed, the versatile pack can be converted to a waist pack or stand-alone bag. The Skyweight offers a breathable back panel for all-day comfort and 330-denier nylon ripstop material for long-lasting durability and toughness in the field.

Specifications

- Lightweight and adjustable
- 60 cubic inches, 1-liter total capacity
- Ambidextrous CCW compartment
- External front MOLLE panel for pouch attachment
- Available in Major Brown, Volcanic or Sage Green colors

MSRP \$45

URL 51ltactical.com



CONVERTIPACK

This transformer goes from shoulder pack to waist pack in seconds, offering you great adaptability when you're in the field. Made of resilient denier polyester, this mini carry-all is both lightweight and highly durable when packed to the gills. The Convertipack offers quick release buckles for fast removal, two 4-inch MOLLE straps, exterior pen pockets, five total pockets/compartments, and four D-rings for additional gear. This small wonder packs a lot in a very small footprint, which is ideal for one-day travel or a few hours of adventuring in nearly any rural or urban location. Versatility is the name of the game with this bag, and it's a clear winner.

Specifications

- Compact design that changes from shoulder to waist pack
- Front zippered pouch houses three small zippered compartments
- MOLLE-compatible for adding attachments
- Convenient top-carry handle
- Available in Black, Coyote Brown or Olive Drab colors

MSRP \$39

URL rothco.com

MED POUCH

Even on a day trip, accidents can happen. This Med Pouch can assist with minor bumps, bruises, cuts and abrasions by carrying just the right amount of first-aid materials for your few hours away from home. It features parachute cord zipper pulls for ease of opening, two internal slots for organization, YKK zippers, and a Velcro hook back (with included loop square) for adding attachments if desired. No worries about finding this necessity in the dark: The first-aid sign is highly reflective to light and glows in the dark. Carry it on its own or add it to your larger day pack; either way it's a must-have for any outdoor trek.

Specifications

- First-aid sign is reflective and glows in the dark
- Velcro hook backed
- Two full-width, internal slot pockets
- 1000-denier/500-denier Cordura nylon
- Made in the USA

MSRP \$59

URL tuffpossumgear.com





BELT POUCH

You've heard of good things coming in small packages. Well, good things go in small packages as you utilize this belt-attached gear pouch on your next outdoor excursion. Enjoy hands-free hiking and collect small samples of nature's offerings with this ultra-tough pouch. Made in the USA, this extra pair of hands is ideal for storing your personal items, such as keys or wallet, or use it as a mini survival kit and pack it with small essentials for fire-making, signaling, water collection, and tasty treats for the trail. The pouch features durable nylon construction with a YKK zipper for ultimate reliability no matter what the conditions are in your neck of the woods. Go big with this small wonder.

Specifications

- Measures 5 inches wide x 4 inches tall x 3 inches deep
- Dual webbing loops accommodate up to a 2-inch belt
- Heavy-duty YKK zipper
- Constructed of durable 1000-denier Cordura nylon
- Available in Ranger Green, Coyote Brown or MultiCam colors

• **MSRP** \$41 to \$46

• **URL** tuffpossumgear.com

RAPID SLING PACK

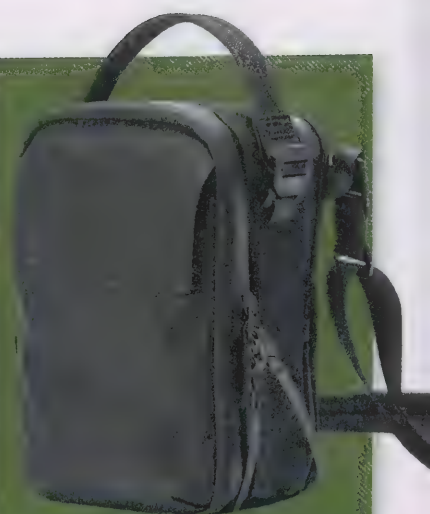
The Rapid Sling Pack finds that sweet spot you were looking for in size. It offers a full 270-degree opening and Quad-Zip access that allows fast entry and an easy reach to your gear. Its Centerline design and external compression straps keep the load balanced and secure, even when traversing uneven terrain, while the cushioned shoulder strap offers long-use comfort. This unit connects with 5.11's Rapid Waist Pack for greater versatility whenever and wherever you need it. Last, but certainly not least, an ID and morale patch platform is included.

Specifications

- 9.5 liter total capacity
- Ambidextrous design with removable shoulder and stabilizer strap
- Full clamshell opening with Quad Zip for easy access
- Internal loop and sleeve for hydration capability
- Available in Black or Kangaroo colors

• **MSRP** \$72

• **URL** 511tactical.com



KOMPAK

This shoulder bag combines classy style, extreme durability and innovative versatility to create a day bag that goes above and beyond what you would ever expect. Constructed like an absolute beast, this bag features 500-denier Cordura, 300-denier ripstop lining, YKK zippers, bond-stitched seams and hardware suited for fine aircraft. In addition, this pack acts like a personal organizer, keeping everything in place until needed. Just unzip and unfold to have access to all your gear and personal items instantly. Also, the Kompak's minimalistic appearance allows it to blend into any urban or rural setting easily, so your private belongings stay private and for your eyes only.

Specifications

- 500-denier Cordura textured material
- Magnetic key ring
- T6 aircraft-grade black anodized aluminum hardware
- YKK Aquaguard zippers
- Magnetic phone-charging pocket

• **MSRP** \$119

• **URL** blackember.com

TKS

The TKS is an excellent sling bag—or is it a waist bag? Well, it's both, and its innovative design offers a seamless transition between the two, all while keeping all your belongings safe, secure and well organized. The unit offers waterproof material, laser-etched hardware, ripstop lining and YKK zippers, creating a tough-as-nails bag for all-around daily use. Its ingenious strap-and-buckle system adjusts quickly, easily and form-fitting for a balanced and comfortable carry in any environment. Quality at its best with the TKS.

Specifications

- Three-layer, waterproof material
- T6 aircraft-grade black anodized aluminum hardware
- German magnetic Fidlock Y-buckle
- Laser-cut textile components
- YKK Aquaguard zippers

MSRP \$109

URL blackember.com



TACTICAL FANNY PACK

Hands-free storage and lightweight mobility sometimes get forgotten—until you're in trouble on the trail. With this pouch, you'll have no issues carrying or collecting small items, all the while barely feeling the weight around your waist. The unit successfully balances a lightweight feel with extremely durable construction material and an easy-release buckle system. Its four compartments, easy-to-open zippers and a MOLLE closure system mean you'll be more than covered when you need maximum space in one of the most compact packs around.

Specifications

- Beefy 500-denier Cordura material
- Reverse stitching for increased durability
- T3 Maritime MOLLE closure system
- Weighs less than 6.5 ounces empty
- Available in Black, Coyote, Ranger Green or MultiCam colors

MSRP \$53

URL t3gear.com



SHACKLETON EDC SATCHEL

This satchel pulls double duty. On one hand, it's a stylish everyday bag that's useful for carrying small electronics and personal items. On the other hand, this bag can join you on adventures into the wild and not skip a beat when it comes to durability and versatility when you're on the move. It offers dual slip pockets, an adjustable buckle closure for one-hand operation, two interior pockets, a padded back panel for comfort and stability and comfortable shoulder straps for all-day use. Cordura nylon construction and made in the USA pride round out this incredible over-the-shoulder carry-all.

Specifications

- Adjustable ITW Cobra buckle closure for one-hand opening
- Integrated slip pockets for small, quick-access tools
- Adjustable 2-inch shoulder strap for optimal comfort
- Constructed of 1000-denier and 500-denier Cordura nylon
- Available in Black, Wolf Gray, Ranger Green or Coyote Brown colors

MSRP \$165 to \$178

URL tuffpossumgear.com





REVIEW

THE 'OH SH*T' KIT

NEVER BE NOT READY

BY REUBEN BOLIEU

A SURVIVAL KIT IS A COLLECTION OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS AND TOOLS TO HELP YOU SURVIVE AN EMERGENCY. IT CAN INCLUDE WATER, FOOD, FIRE-STARTING MATERIALS AND MORE. THE IMPORTANCE OF A SURVIVAL KIT CANNOT BE OVERSTATED, AS IT CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH IN A CRISIS.



Created by Bear Forest
Knives, Wkzoo Gear and
On Three, this adventure
kit is a must-have for
any survivalist.



Kit Specs

- ✱ **Dimensions**
4.92" long x 3.35" wide
x 1.38" deep
- ✱ **Weight** 9.2 oz.
- ✱ **bearforestknives.com**
- ✱ **MSRP \$150**

The kit is small enough to easily fit into your pocket and be carried anywhere you go.

A well-designed and fully stocked survival kit can save your life and the lives of those around you.

OH SHIT

Having the right tools can make all the difference in adventuring. That's why three powerhouses of the outdoor gear world—Bear Forest Knives, Wazoo Gear and On Three—have come together to create a genuinely unique must-have adventure kit.

Say goodbye to flimsy and poorly made survival kits, and say hello to the Oh Sh!t Kit. This compact and powerful arsenal punches way above its weight class with 26 high-quality tools, including a versatile, tough-as-nails ulu knife that can handle even the most demanding tasks.

This is the perfect companion kit for potential emergencies, from patching up your gear to lighting a fire, purifying water and signaling when you need it most. The OSK is ideal for bushcrafters, hunters, campers, hikers and anyone who wants to be equipped for anything without being weighed down.

Kit Contents

- ✱ **Ulu Knife** 80CrV2 high carbon steel, 3.5" blade, 0.125" thick, 2" wide, 90-degree edge
- ✱ **Mylar Emergency Blanket** Aluminized mylar, blanket/tarp
- ✱ **Safety Pins (2)** Brass, size 00, 0.75" long



While building your own kit is a great idea, a good-quality one like this is a great base that you can then add to and customize as needed.

IMPORTANCE OF A KIT

Having a survival kit is an absolute must in any emergency. It is a comprehensive collection of essential items and tools that help you to survive no matter the circumstances. A survival kit typically includes water, food, fire-starting materials, first-aid supplies, navigation tools, shelter materials, signaling devices and more. The importance of a survival kit is paramount as it can make a lifesaving difference in a crisis and can be the difference between life and death.

A survival kit can help you in many ways, such as:

- ✱ **Providing you with the basic needs of water, food and warmth** Without these, you can quickly succumb to dehydration, starvation or hypothermia.
- ✱ **Enabling you to treat injuries and illnesses**

A survival kit can contain bandages, antiseptics, painkillers, antibiotics and other medications that can prevent infections and complications.

✱ **Helping you find your way and communicate with others** A survival kit can include a compass, a map, a whistle, a flashlight, a radio and other devices that can help you orient yourself and signal for help.

✱ **Improving your morale and mental state** A survival kit can also contain items that can boost your spirits and keep you calm, such as a photo of your loved ones, a book, a game or a religious piece.

A survival kit is useful for wilderness scenarios and urban disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires or terrorist attacks. You never know when an emergency might strike, so it is wise to prepare a survival kit in advance and keep it in a safe and accessible place.

✳ **Sharps Style Needle**
Size 7, pre-magnetized

✳ **Fishing Hooks (3)** Eagle
Claw, Model 084, size 8

✳ **Split Shot Weights (3)**
Lead, size 3/0

✳ **Fishing Line** 40 feet
Power Pro Braided Spectra,
50-pound test

✳ **Whistle** Pealess design,
volume 100-plus decibels,
anodized aluminum

✳ **Cordage** 25 feet Technora,
400-pound break strength,
black

✳ **Fire Plug Tinder (2)**
six-plus minute burn time

✳ **Ferro Rod** 0.25" diameter,
1.5" long, 0.125" lanyard hole,
shavings burn at 5,500 F

✳ **Water Container** 1 liter
capacity, food-safe plastic

✳ **Purification Tablets (2)**
Katadyn Micropur MP1,
EPA registered, 1 tablet per
1 liter of water

✳ **Water Pre-Filter** Melitta
flat coffee filter

✳ **Ranger Bands (3)** EPDM
rubber, non-latex, flammable

✳ **Aluminium Foil** 12" x 6"
custom sheet metal, 0.003"
thick

✳ **Wire Saw** Cutting length
17", eight-strand braided
stainless steel

✳ **Brass Wire** 24-gauge,
15 feet long

✳ **Ceramic Knife** Black
zirconia ceramic, chisel
grind, exposed edge for
striking ferro rod

✳ **Compass** 18mm diameter,
kerosene-filled, luminous
for seven hours, operates

from 20 F to 120 F, water-
resistant to 100 feet

✳ **Signal Mirror** SOL Mini
Rescue Flash, 1.5" x 2"

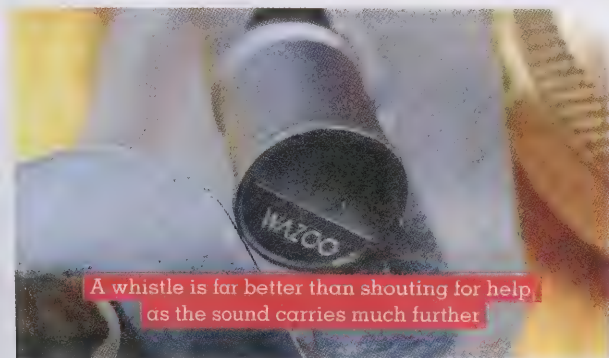
✳ **Trail Markers (6)**
Reusable high-visibility
markers, fluorescent
orange for daytime,
reflective for nighttime
visibility

✳ **Zip Ties (2)** 5.5" long,
40-pound break strength,
fluorescent orange

✳ **Duct Tape** Gorilla Tape,
1" wide, 24" long, black

✳ **Flashlight** Photon
Micro-Light I, waterproof
IPX-7, replaceable batteries,
18-plus hour run time

✳ **The FireCard (1)**
Wazoo branded credit
card-sized fire starter,
highly flammable
modified biopolymer





**THIS KIT
IS SMALL
ENOUGH
TO EASILY
FIT INTO A
POCKET OR
SMALL PACK,
SO YOU'LL BE
READY FOR
ANYTHING.**

POCKETABLE

When carrying a portable survival kit, it must be designed with ease of carrying in mind. The kit should be compact enough to fit in various places, like your cargo pocket, glove compartment or backpack, to ensure you are always prepared. It's vital to avoid large, bulky kits or small tins filled with numerous low-quality items that won't be useful in real-life survival situations.

SURVIVAL TRIO

These three survival experts—Wazoo Survival Gear, Bear Forest Knives, and On Three (Jason Salyer)—have collaborated to create a unique survival kit. Wazoo Survival Gear is renowned for its functional wearable survival tools. At the same time, Bear Forest Knives is known for producing high-quality American-made cutlery for woods use, hunting and being outside. Jason Salyer of On Three contributed his knowledge and experience to design the On Three ulu knife, manufactured by BFKs. By combining their expertise, they offer a reliable and top-notch survival kit—the Oh Sh!t Kit.

Bear Forest Knives
bearforestknives.com
Wazoo Survival Gear
wazoosurvivalgear.com
ON THREE

Instagram: @jasonleesurvival

STANDOUT GEAR

Although the OSK has quality pieces across the board, some items can be used multiple times and shine above the rest.

An ulu knife is a traditional tool used by Indigenous people in Alaska, Canada and Greenland, though its popularity has spread across the globe. It has a curved blade attached to a handle that's traditionally made of bone, antler, horn or wood. The ulu knife is used for various purposes, such as skinning and cleaning animals, cutting food, and making clothing. The shape of the blade allows for a rocking motion that makes cutting easier and faster. The ulu knife comes in different sizes and styles, depending on the region and the use.

The OSK ulu is a versatile tool that packs the maximum-size blade in a compact package. Jason Salyer (TV personality and survivalist) designed the ulu knife with a 3.5-inch 80CrV2 high carbon steel blade. The blade is 0.125 inches thick, 2 inches wide, has a 90-degree back edge, and comes with a blade cover/handle made of PVC rubber with metal U-shapes.

This ulu knife is designed for woodworking, fire preparation and food/game processing. With its Scandi grind, it's perfect for carving, and its curved blade is ideal for skinning. The 90-degree spine makes scraping a ferro rod or processing tinder easy. Additionally, it can be conveniently attached

to a split stick, offering more handle possibilities. Its ability to quickly convert from a small knife to a tomahawk-type tool makes it useful in shelter construction and for larger carving projects, though there is also a saw in the kit, which we'll get to shortly. Overall, the ulu is essential for any outdoor enthusiast or survivalist who needs a reliable and efficient cutting tool that's easy to use and maintain, even in the field.

The wire saw is a cutting tool with a length of 17 inches. It is made of braided stainless steel consisting of eight strands and has aluminum crimped end loops. The tool is ideal for cutting small pieces of wood and can easily handle wrist-sized or smaller items, saving the edge of the ulu knife for other chores. It works quickly and efficiently. It's beneficial for creating survival shelters and can cut through plastic, bone or light metal.

The OSK includes a dependable Wazoo Gear SOS whistle and SOL Mini Rescue Flash signal mirror, both of which can be used to signal for help when needed. The ferro rod and Photon Micro-Light I flashlight add even more options for signaling. Moreover, the kit features reusable high-visibility trail markers that are fluorescent orange for daytime use and reflective for nighttime visibility.

Whether in the wilderness or just exploring the great outdoors, the Oh Sh!t Kit is the perfect companion that won't weigh you down. This kit has got your back!

Kit components can be
attached to key fobs,
keeping fire, cutting,
signaling and
illumination at hand.

|||||

**THIS KIT WORKS FAR BETTER
THAN ITS SIZE WOULD INDICATE.**

|||||

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